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CARD TRICKS
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CARD TRICKS

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BY

PROFESSOR HOFFMANN

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WITH ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND DIAGRAMS



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CARD TRICKS

WITHOUT APPARATUS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

AMONG the multifarious illusions of the conjurer, few are more truly magical, or to the uninitiated more inexplicable, than a really good card trick. The prestige of the illusion is enhanced by the simplicity of the conditions under which it is presented. Anybody can understand that a stage conjurer, surrounded by the paraphernalia of his art, may have unlimited mechanical aids at his command. His bow-legged tables and eccentric chairs, his magic picture-frames and cabalistic covers are credited, not unreasonably, with a large share of the merit of his performance. But when a quiet-looking gentleman at an evening party, with no visible apparatus save an ordinary pack of cards, tells the company not only what cards they have drawn, but what cards they have thought of, or even writes down what they will think of presently; when a card just seen in the performer's hand is, a moment later, found in the pocket of a person at the other end of the room; when chosen cards rise gravely from the pack, change suit and value, or vanish altogether; when a mutilated card repairs itself before the eyes of the company; when cards are seen to grow smaller and smaller, finally flying up the performer's sleeve and nestling on his shirt-front;—the spectator, unless he adopts the hypothesis of a worthy old gentleman I once knew, "the devil's in it," is

compelled to give all the honour where it is justly due, viz., to the skill and address of the performer.

This brief *résumé*, which is not in the least overdrawn, will give some faint idea of the varieties of effect of which card tricks are susceptible. With the aid of a few simple mechanical appliances, the list might be extended *ad libitum*; indeed, a skilled performer could readily make up a two hours' programme of card tricks alone, each successive illusion being of a totally different character.*

The principles of card magic are, to a great extent, identical with those of other forms of conjuring, but there are wide differences in their practical application, and the mastery of the one by no means implies that of the other. Each branch of the art has sleights peculiar to itself. A man may be a capital performer with coins, balls, &c., and yet unable to perform the simplest card trick. On the other hand, the most skilful card conjurer I have ever met with, M. Charlier, knew little or nothing of other forms of conjuring.

In the chapter which next follows, I shall describe at length the sleights and special processes appropriate to card conjuring; after which I shall give practical examples of their application.

First, however, I commend to the consideration of the novice two or three maxims applicable more or less to all conjuring:—

Never announce beforehand the precise nature of the trick. In the first place, if your audience know exactly what you are going to do, their vigilance is directed in exactly the right direction to discover "How it's done." Secondly, there may be a hitch somewhere, and you may not be able to produce the precise effect you had intended. If, however, you have not announced your intentions beforehand, you may still save your credit by terminating the trick in a different manner.

It follows, as a corollary to the above maxim, *that the same trick should never be repeated in the same way before the same*

* It is hardly necessary to remark that no prudent performer would venture to do so. Twenty minutes is the *maximum* length of time which should ever be devoted at a stretch to card tricks exclusively.

company. On the other hand, the same or a similar effect may often be produced by wholly different means. In such case, a repetition not only adds to the effect of the trick, but positively increases the difficulty of discovery.

The performer should arrange his "patter" (as to which more hereafter) so as to mislead the audience as to the method employed. For example, if the trick is really dependent on sleight of hand, it should be presented as produced by mental calculation, and *vice versa*.

Lastly, the neophyte should sternly make up his mind to acquire *skill in sleight of hand*. Without it, the best feats are impossible. *Plus* sleight of hand, a mere school-boy trick may often be converted into a really striking illusion. Don't be discouraged by imagining that the needful study is a formidable undertaking. Nothing worth having is to be had without working for it, and manual dexterity is no exception. You must not expect to acquire offhand the finish of a Verbeck or a Bertram, but with ordinary aptitude a couple of hours of steady practice daily during a period of three months should make a very fair card conjurer; and much less than this will suffice for the acquirement of half-a-dozen tricks good enough to suffice the neophyte till he has had time to master the deeper secrets of the craft.

Where available, a lesson or two from an expert, amateur or professional, will greatly tend to facilitate the early stages of the learner's progress (chiefly in the way of showing him what *not* to do). This, however, is by no means indispensable. The explanations in this book have been framed on the assumption that the novice has no such aid; and if he follows them carefully (always pack of cards in hand) he will find no difficulty that close attention will not speedily remove.

CHAPTER II.

SLEIGHT OF HAND PROCESES APPLICABLE TO CARD CONJURING.

To Make the Pass.—What is known as the “pass” in card conjuring is a movement reversing the positions of the upper and lower halves of the pack, so that the cards which in the first instance were at the top, pass to the bottom, and *vice versâ*. The utility of this operation will become more obvious as the learner begins to make progress in the art. As a matter of fact, it is the very backbone of card conjuring, and three-fourths of the most brilliant illusions would be impossible without it. It is also used, less innocently, by card-sharpers, after arranging the pack in a particular manner, to neutralise the effect of the “cut.” Hence its French title, “*sauter la coupe*.”

The pass may be made with both hands, or with one hand only, the former being the method most frequently used. I will therefore describe it first.

To Make the Pass with both Hands.—Take the pack in the left hand, face downwards, and insert the little finger, as far as the first joint, between the upper and lower halves (see Fig. 1). Next bring the right hand over the cards, as shown in Fig. 2, and clip the *lower* portion between the second and third fingers at top, and the thumb at bottom. At the same time, with the second and third fingers of the left hand, exert a gentle pressure on the upper portion, which we will call *a*. Press the lower portion, which we will call *b*, into the fork of the left thumb, slightly lifting its opposite edge, and at the same time draw away *a* by extending the fingers of the left hand until the inner edge of the upper packet just passes the

outer edge of the lower. The fingers of the left hand now close again, carrying *a* below *b*, as in Fig. 3. The dividing fingers are removed, and the pass is made.

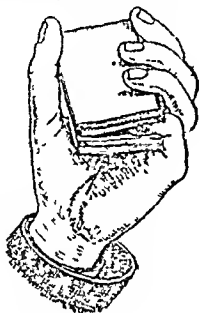


FIG 1.

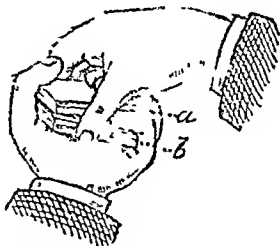


FIG 2.

The operation, as above described, may on first perusal sound complicated, but in skilled hands it lasts but a fraction of a second, and is performed so deftly as to be invisible to the most watchful eyes. To secure this degree of perfection, however, a considerable amount of practice will be necessary,* and it is a good plan to practise before a mirror, as the exact position of the performer relatively to his audience is an important factor in this particular. If he stands so that the back of the right hand shall be toward the spectators, the pass, neatly performed, will be quite imperceptible.

This, however, is not always possible. The performer may frequently have spectators on all sides of him. Under such

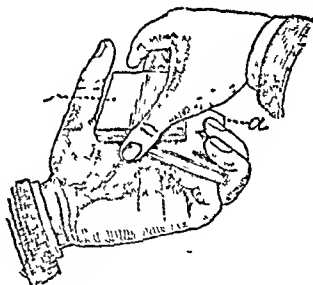


FIG 3

* The actual amount of practice required will depend greatly on natural aptitude. An hour a day for a fortnight should enable the tyro to make the pass fairly well; but after a twelvemonth he may still find something to amend.

circumstances he must cover his manipulations by a half-turn to the right or left, or by a slight "sweep" of the hands at the moment of making the pass. Under cover of this greater movement the less becomes practically imperceptible.

In the *very* early stages of his practice there is no objection to the learner's inserting the first finger, as well as the fourth, below the upper half of the pack. The pass is much easier under such conditions, but it is much less neat,* and the sooner the student discards such adventitious aid, the better for his ultimate progress.

Few sleights demand more practice than the pass. On the other hand, it is labour well expended; and the student must spare no pains to make himself thoroughly perfect.

The above is the only form of the pass worth using where both hands are employed. The conjurer must, however, be able to make the pass with one hand only.

Single-handed Pass, No. 1.—In the old-fashioned method

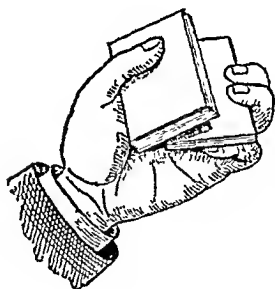


FIG. 4

of making the single-handed pass, the pack is taken in the left hand, and, with the thumb across the cards, opened bookwise at its outer edge. The second and third fingers are brought over, and the first and fourth under, the lower packet, as shown in Fig. 4 † The fingers are then extended till the inner edge of the lower packet just clears the outer edge of the upper, which falls below it, thereby effecting the desired transposition.

The student will be apt to find, when he first attempts the above movement, that his hand is much too small, or conversely, that the cards are too large. The first objection he cannot cure; but the second he may, by using cards of

* The same remark will apply to the use of the third finger in place of the fourth, which is preferred by some performers.

† There is a trifling inaccuracy in this diagram. The thumb should extend quite across the cards, the tip overlapping their outer edge.

get-at-able. The pack to be changed, on the other hand, is dropped into the *profonde*, a larger and deeper pocket, opening horizontally on the inside of the coat-tail.

The drawing-room performer should always endeavour to secure, by way of "stage," a small table at a little distance from his audience. The journey to and from this table gives him the opportunity every now and then to turn his back upon the spectators, and under cover of this turn the necessary "change" is made; one hand drawing the prepared pack from the *pochette*, while the other drops the unprepared pack into the *profonde*. This is the simplest form of the change. A more artistic method is as follows:—Taking the prepared pack out of the *pochette* with the left hand, the performer brings it for a moment under the unprepared pack in the right hand, makes the pass as with the two halves of a single pack (see page 4), thereby reversing the position of the two packs, and then with the left hand drops the unprepared pack, now undermost, into the *profonde* on that side.

Another plan, dispensing with the necessity of the *pochette*, is to have the prepared pack beneath the performer's vest, held in position, just above the waist, by a broad band of elastic, stitched horizontally to the vest-lining about two and a half inches up. The elastic must be tight enough to hold the cards securely, and even with this precaution, it would not be well to trust to their good behaviour for too lengthened a period. In this case, the right hand, held purposely low down, as the performer turns to the table, transfers the ordinary pack to the left hand, and

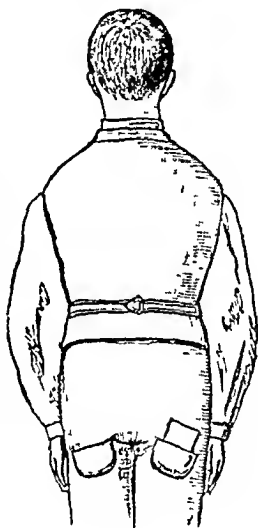


FIG 30.

instantly draws down the prepared pack, while the left, as before, dropping to the side, lets fall the ordinary pack into the *profonde*.

Upon the stage, the professional conjurer usually has the command of another appliance which greatly facilitates the exchange of a pack of cards or other object for another. This is a hidden shelf, known as a *servante*, in the rear of one or more of his tables. It is an easy matter, while passing behind the table under any colourable pretext, to drop the hand to the level of the shelf, deposit the article to be got rid of, and pick up its substitute.

In an ordinary drawing-room performance, the card conjurer is hardly likely to be provided with a *servante* to his table, but a work-box, cigar-box, or a good-sized book on the table will make a very fair substitute, the exchange being made behind it. So long as the spectators are well to the front it is astonishing how little "cover" suffices for the conjurer's most daring manipulations.

In connection with this subject, I may briefly advert to the use of the "magic wand." This is quite optional in the case of card tricks, and the drawing-room wizard, called upon at a moment's notice to give an extempore sample of his talent, may hardly care to produce so professional-looking an implement. But where the performer aspires to give a regular "show," be it only of half-a-dozen tricks, he will do well to accustom himself to the habitual employment of the wand, which has a host of uses never dreamt of by outsiders. In the first place, it has a far greater effect than most people would suppose upon the imagination of the spectator. Though in cool blood he knows perfectly well that the touch of a mere piece of wood and ivory cannot change, or vanish, or produce a given article, yet, as no other explanation seems available, he is driven half unconsciously to accept, in a greater or less degree, the theory of the supernatural powers of the performer, and on the *post hoc, propter hoc* principle, to believe that the touch of

the wand has, in some mysterious way, contributed to produce the strange effect which he has witnessed.

But the wand has a more direct practical value than this. It gives the performer the necessary pretext for doing sundry useful things, which it would be by no means so easy for him to do without it. Thus the fact of holding the wand in the same hand is a material aid in concealing the fact that a card is palmed therein, the two things seeming, to most people, incompatible. Again, the brief journey, or even a mere half-turn, to the table to pick up or lay down the wand, gives the needful opportunity to "change" a card or envelope, turn over a card-box, or the like. In default of a proper wand some extempore substitute, such as a ruler or a lady's fan, may be employed, but such homely makeshifts have by no means the prestige of the real article, and an elegant little wand should be one of the first investments of the amateur who "means business." It should be about fifteen inches long and five eighths of an inch in diameter, of ebony or other fancy wood, with mounts of ivory or silver, and the ends should be flush with the body of the wand, not clumsy "caps," as is the case with the commoner kinds of wand sold at the conjuring depôts.

CHAPTER III.

SPECIAL CARDS AND TRICKS THEREWITH.

THERE is a very large section of conjuring tricks which are performed by the aid of special cards, mechanical and otherwise, and it may be well, before going further, to give a brief description of their principal varieties. I do not here refer to appliances, like the "torn card," prepared for the purpose of one particular trick. The cards of which I now propose to speak are such as, like the "forcing" cards already described (p. 14), form auxiliaries in the performance of card tricks generally.

Long or Wide Cards.—The use of these is a very old expedient. The long card is a card longer (and the wide card a card wider) by about the thickness of a sixpence than the rest of the pack. It will readily be perceived that such a card can be found in a moment, either by simply cutting at such card, or feeling for it with the finger-tip, the projecting edge at once indicating its whereabouts.

Longs and Shorts.—This is an extension of the principle of the long card. The performer, we will say, has had three cards freely drawn, handing the pack to the drawers that they may be sure he has not influenced their choice, and yet, when the cards are returned to the pack, he names or reproduces them without difficulty. The secret lies in the fact that, between the drawing and the replacement of the cards, the performer has substituted for the pack from which they were taken a "short" pack, *i.e.*, a pack all of whose cards are a fraction shorter or narrower than those of the others. Each of the cards, therefore, when replaced becomes a "long" or "wide" card, and can be found without difficulty. The long

card, as such, is very rarely used by a professional conjurer ; but the use of long and short packs is a valuable resource in stage conjuring, and is frequently employed.

A very good feat, dependent upon the use of longs and shorts, is that of cutting at a chosen card blindfold. A card having been drawn, with the utmost freedom of choice, the performer, before it is replaced in the pack, asks some one to blindfold him. Standing with his back to the company for this purpose, he is enabled, under cover of his own body, with perfect ease to exchange the pack first used for a shorter one, previously concealed within or under his vest. When securely blindfolded, he turns, and requests the drawer to replace his card in the pack and shuffle. However well the cards may be mixed he will, of course, have no difficulty in cutting at the chosen card.

To heighten the difficulty the cards may, instead of being laid on the table, be placed in the pocket of a third person, when the performer will pick out the card. In this case, however, it will be found more convenient to have the second pack a trifle *narrower* (rather than shorter) than the first.

Biseauté or Tapering Cards.—This is another and more refined adaptation of the “long card” principle. The whole of the cards in the pack are cut as Fig. 31, though in a much less degree, the extent of the “taper” being, for the sake of clearness, exaggerated in the diagram. It will be obvious that if a card be taken from such a pack, turned round, and then replaced, its broader end will be brought into juxtaposition with the narrow ends of the remaining cards, making it, for the time being, a “wide” card, and enabling the performer to gain instant contact of it when necessary.

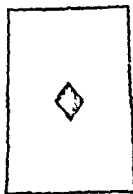


FIG. 31.

It is possible, with a pack of *biseauté* cards, to divide the red cards from the black at a single stroke. The red cards would be placed with their narrow ends all one way, and the black with their narrow ends the other way. The pack would be

then taken as shewn in Fig. 32, and the hands drawn apart, when all the red cards would be found in the one hand, and the black cards in the other. Court cards might be divided from plain cards in the same way. Practically, however, a conjurer would, in the American phrase, be "giving himself away" by exhibiting such a feat, as any one with the most elementary knowledge of the art would infer at once that he was using a *biseauté* pack, and the effect of any other card tricks he might afterwards perform would be heavily discounted.

Some little address is necessary for the due manipulation of a *biseauté* pack. It is clear that before the drawn card is replaced, either the card itself or the pack must be turned round.

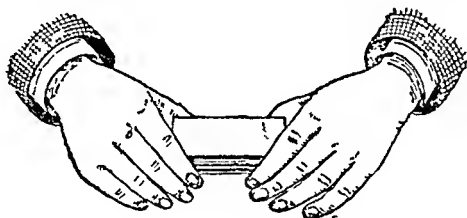


FIG. 32.

In the ordinary case of inviting a person to choose and replace a card, the pack, and not the card, will usually have to be turned. The best plan to effect this is to close the "fan," and, for a moment, hold the pack in both hands, as in Fig. 32, the end which was previously outspread, and which we will call *a*, being between the forefinger and thumb of the right hand. In offering the pack that the card may be replaced, the opposite end, *b*, is spread, and the necessary reversal is made. The needful time is gained by a request to the drawer to take special note of his card, or to show it to his neighbour on either side of him.

Where the performer himself shows and replaces the card, the latter, and not the pack, should be reversed. The best way to effect this is, holding the pack in the left hand, to take the

card between the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, and turn it over *longitudinally*. In replacing it in the pack, turn it over *laterally*, and it will be in the desired position.

Tricks with Long Cards.—I proceed to give a few illustrations of the use of “long” and *biscauté* cards. I must however repeat that the long card, save in the modified form of “longs and shorts” (see p. 38) is an expedient no skilled conjurer would ever dream of using. It is very old; it is widely known, it is very liable to detection, and it is only available for, at most, a couple of tricks; for it is obvious that the reappearance of the same card half a dozen times over in different tricks would suggest to the least suspicious person that there was something illegitimate about it. The chief reason, however, why the skilled performer does not use the long card is that he does not need it. The expert in sleight of hand has half-a-dozen better strings to his bow. In the first place, he can “force” (see page 11) whatever card he chooses, by means of the “pass” (page 4) he can regain control of it, and by “palming” it (page 16), he can retain possession of it as long as he pleases. By means of a “false shuffle” (page 25), he can apparently lose it hopelessly in the pack, and yet, by means of the “bridge” (page 29), he can find it again at a moment’s notice. With such facilities at his command, to offer him a “long card” is like inviting a race-horse to ride in a wheelbarrow. To the beginner, on the other hand, the long card is a valuable assistance, and I proceed to indicate two or three of the ways in which he may avail himself of it.

The long card may of course be shuffled with the pack without any fear of losing it, for the simple act of “cutting” at that card finds it again, at the bottom of the upper heap. One of the simplest modes of using it is to offer the pack, just shuffled, to some one to choose a card. “Replace it, please,” says the performer, at the same time cutting at the long card, so that the drawn card may be replaced beneath it. The pack may now be shuffled with very small risk of the two cards being parted, the greater projection of the upper card tending to

prevent their separation, and the performer has therefore merely to deal the cards face upwards, and when he comes to the long card, boldly to declare that the next card was the one chosen. Or he may reveal the drawn card by what is known as the "nerve" trick. He cuts at the long card, thereby making the chosen card the uppermost card of the lower packet, which he places after the usual manner on top. Turning the pack over, he gives it to the drawer to hold, face uppermost, and then strikes it out of his hand, the chosen card being left staring him in the face.

Of course, there is a *possibility*, though remote, of the two cards being separated by the shuffle. In such case the trick will fail, and the performer will have to explain that "Venus was in the House of Mars," or give some other burlesque reason for his non-success. To avoid such a contingency, a better plan (if the performer's skill extend so far), is to force the long card itself. This done, the card replaced, and the pack duly shuffled, the card may be reproduced in a variety of ways. The simplest method is to cut at the card, and at once exhibit it, but this is rather a commonplace *dénoûment*. A more effectual plan is to cut without showing the card, place the lower half on the top, and requesting the drawer to extend his hand, lay the pack face downwards on his palm : then, after a few appropriate remarks on the attraction of gravitation, animal magnetism, or anything the performer pleases, to command the chosen card to pass down through the pack and prostrate itself on the spectator's palm, in due course showing that it has done so.

Another very good plan is as follows. Get the card to the bottom (by the cut as above mentioned), and lay the pack face downwards on a sheet of notepaper, fold over the edges, turn down the ends and have them sealed. Then turn over the parcel, and invite the drawer to write the name of his card (as to which you profess to be quite ignorant) on the back of it. This done, place your finger on the parcel and say, "I command the seven of spades" (or whatever the card may be), "to rise to the top, beneath my finger."

Handing the drawer a pair of seissors, you invite him to cut

open the paper at the top, and immediately beneath it will be found the chosen card.

If the performer is sufficiently expert in sleight of hand, he may, instead of openly cutting, insert his little finger *above* the long card, and by making the pass, bring it to the top of the pack. It will then be in position for reproduction by the "nerve" trick, or by any of the other methods to be hereafter described.

Tricks with Biseauté Cards.—*Biseauté* cards have several advantages over the long card. In the first place, until the card is turned there is no tell-tale projection anywhere about the pack; and, secondly, the performer has no need to force a card, every card in the pack being potentially a "long" card. *Biseauté* cards scarcely belong to what may be called



FIG 33.

legitimate conjuring, and I should not counsel their habitual or frequent use, but I regard them as fairly belonging to the armoury of the conjurer, and I have known wizards of great eminence who did not hesitate to use them on occasion.

It is obvious that any long card trick may be equally well performed with a *biseauté* pack, with the advantage that there is no necessity to force a card in the first instance. As an example of the higher flights of which the *biseauté* pack is capable I will describe a little trick of my own invention, which absolutely depends upon the use of such a pack, the trick being impossible with any other.

The trick is presented as an example of the attractive power of gold. Spreading the pack upon the table as shown in Fig. 33, I invite three of the company each to lay a gold coin (a sovereign or half-sovereign at pleasure) on any card of the

row. I then take up, show, and replace each such card in succession, after the manner described at page 40, *i.e.*, turning over each card lengthways to show and sideways to replace it, the effect being that the three cards are left "turned" in the pack. Any person is now invited to pick up and shuffle the pack; then to replace it on the table. If he shuffles in any usual manner there is no fear whatever that any more cards will be "turned" by the process; however well they may be mixed in other particulars. The cards being replaced on the table I proceed to cut them, taking care to do so at one of the "turned" cards, and so bringing one of the three to the bottom. The three coins meanwhile have been left lying on the table. I place the complete pack on the centre coin, and remarking that I am about to divide it into three portions, cut again, a portion to the right and a portion to the left, each time cutting at one of the other turned cards, and so bringing that card to the bottom. Each coin is now covered by a packet of cards, and after some further remarks on the vein of avarice inherent even in cards, and the attractive power of gold, I inform the company that each of the chosen cards will go in search of its own piece of gold, and, turning up the three packets one after another, show that they have done so.

This, however, is only the first stage of the trick. Placing the three heaps together, I invite some one to shuffle them. When they are returned I call attention to the three coins on the table, by asking some one to place them touching one another in the form of a triangle. Meanwhile, a second use of the *biseauté* pack is exemplified. Taking the pack in the usual manner in the left hand, I feel for the projecting edges of the three cards, and with the thumb and middle finger of the left hand, draw them down an inch or so; then with the "twist" described at page 20, bring them together at the bottom of the pack. This, if deftly done, attracts no attention. Then, placing the pack on the three coins, I remark that though the cards have been so freely shuffled the three will still seek their own, in the shape of the golden coins, and after a momentary pause (professedly to give them time) lift them and show that

as Robert-Houdin, as he relates in his *Tricheries des Grecs*, was for several days completely baffled in attempting to discover the secret of a quantity of cards marked on the above principle.

The performer must of course endeavour to disguise the fact that he "reads" the cards by sight. In order to do this, and at the same time to make a pretext for the necessary close inspection, he may profess to name the cards by *smell*, explaining to the audience that there is a distinct difference in this respect between the four suits, spades having, say, an earthy smell, clubs a flavour of cigarettes, and hearts a scent of

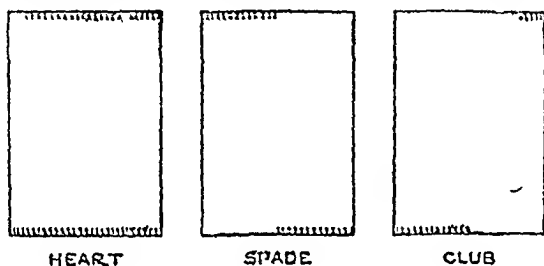


FIG. 41.

ess bouquet, diamonds alone having no perfume. The pretence of smelling enables the performer to hold the card close to his eyes, and at such an angle that the mark shall be perceptible. As the diamonds have no mark, a card of that suit may on emergency be handed for examination to any person who may seem to entertain a suspicion of the secret.

If, however, the performer uses marked cards at all, it will be well that the mark should convey more definite information, and indicate the value as well as the suit of the card. A mere pin-point, duly placed, may be made to give this information. The precise position of the indicating points is a matter for the operator himself; the sole condition being that they shall be intelligible to him, and as imperceptible as possible to other people. If the card be backed with a fancy pattern, the nature of such pattern will to some extent govern the position

of the point. Thus, suppose that the card is backed with a *fleur de lis* pattern, four in a row, as in Fig. 42. Taking the suits in alphabetical order, let the first flower to the left be taken to represent clubs, the second diamonds, the third hearts, and the fourth spades. Now add to the appropriate flower a single dot, to show the value of the card. Thus, a minute dot just over the central petal of the flower will indicate an ace, one against the left hand petal a king, against the right hand petal a queen, and so on, as shown in Fig. 43. When Fig. 43 is once

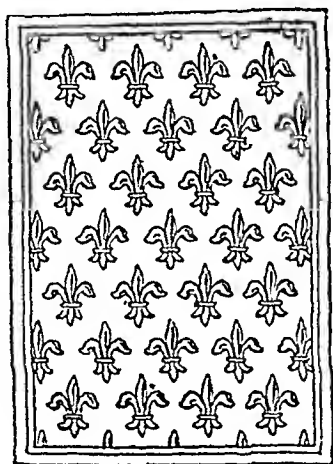


FIG 42.

committed to memory, a single glance will suffice to note the position of the dot,* and thereby to discover the nature of the card. Thus, the mark in Fig. 42 shows that the card is the ten of hearts.

Fig. 44 gives an example of a system of marking applicable to a diamond pattern, and the generality of geometrical or floral designs can be dealt with with equal facility.

A running pattern is not quite so easy to manage, but a

* The dot is repeated at each end of the card, so that it is immaterial which end happens, for the time being, to be uppermost.

little thought and perseverance will overcome any difficulty, and as the cards to be treated will be the property of the conjurer himself, he will naturally select the kind of pattern that will best lend itself to his purpose. The more the indicating dot is mixed up with other dots in the pattern of the card, the less visible will it be, and consequently the more readily will it defy detection.

Even in the case of a plain-backed card, a single point may be so placed as to indicate suit and value. Robert-Houdin gives an example, having relation, however, not to the complete pack of 52, but to the piquet pack of 32 cards, as generally used in France. The upper part of each card is

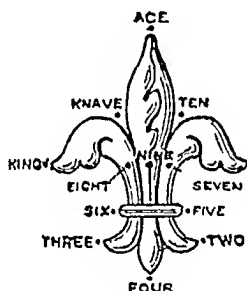


FIG. 43.

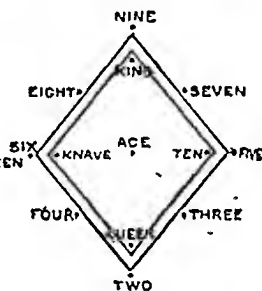


FIG. 44

regarded as divided by eight (imaginary) perpendicular and four horizontal lines (see Fig. 45), the perpendicular divisions representing the value, and the horizontal the suit of the card. The indicating mark is placed at the intersection of the appropriate lines. Thus a dot at the point marked *a* in the diagram would indicate the queen of diamonds; one at the point *b* the eight of hearts.

For conjuring purposes, however, the most perfect system of marking is that of the late M. Charlier, already mentioned. M. Charlier's system, like the above, applies to the 32-card pack only, which from the greater facilities it affords for the use of sleight of hand, is generally preferred by conjurers. It differs, however, from the above in one im-

portant particular, viz., that the marks are "read" by feel, and not by sight. A single mark, to indicate both suit and value, would be inadequate for this purpose. It will be readily seen that in the system described by Robert-Houdin the eye has to measure very carefully the precise position of the point, or a queen might be mistaken for a knave, or a nine for an

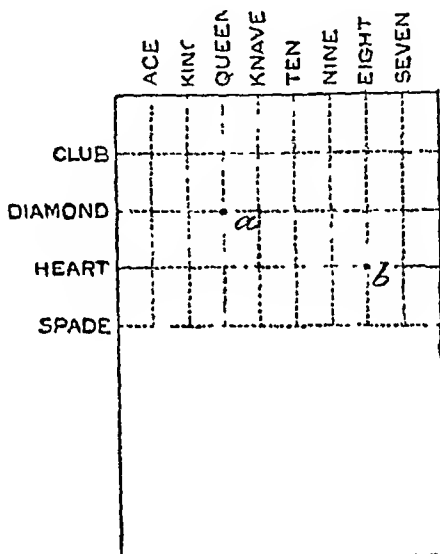


FIG 45.

eight. For greater clearness in this particular the Charlier system employs *two* dots, one to indicate the suit, and the other the value of the card (see Fig. 46)* It will be observed that the suits (other than diamonds) are indicated by points on an imaginary line nearly bisecting the left hand upper angle of the card. The "value" points, other than queen and seven, travel round the upper and right hand edges of the card, the queen point standing alone midway between the point indicating the club suit and that indicating the nine, and forming

* The diagram indicates the position of the various points on the back of the card.

a quadrangle with the nine, ten and knave points. The diamond suit has no mark, neither has the number seven. If, therefore, a card be found with a point for suit, but none for value, it will be the seven of the indicated suit. If a card be found with no mark of any kind, it may be safely predicated that it is the seven of diamonds

Thus far as to the position of the indicating marks ; we now come to the method of making them. As I have already intimated, they are intended to be read by feel and not by sight. They must, therefore, be in relief, and this is effected by laying the card, face upwards, on a leaden slab, and puncturing it with a needle from the face outwards at the proper point. This causes a minute excrescence on the back of the card ; scarcely visible even to close examination, but distinctly perceptible to the sensitive cuticle of the thumb when lightly passed over it.* To "read" the cards, the operator takes the pack in the left hand, as if about to deal at whist or other card game. The thumb should

be well across the middle of the pack, and if it be made to describe a quarter circle in an upward direction over the top card, it will necessarily pass first over the mark of the value, and then that of the suit. After a little practice it will be found that the thumb will read the marks with perfect ease. Just at first the performer will require to glance at the cards to make sure of the position of the thumb, but as his familiarity

* The more highly skilled the performer, and the more sensitive his touch, the less marked need the projection be. The cards used by Charlier himself were so lightly marked that it needed an almost microscopic examination to discover that they had undergone any preparation.

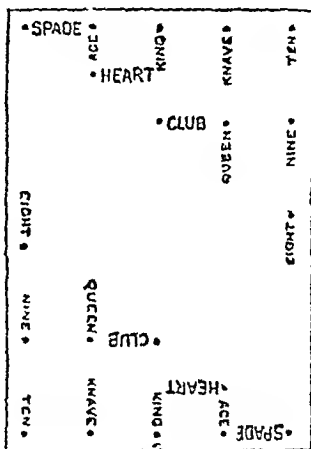


FIG. 46.

with the system increases, this will become unnecessary : the thumb will measure the distance for itself, the eyes taking no part in the matter.

This last is a point of great importance, for it is an axiom in conjuring that the eyes of the audience will invariably follow the direction of those of the performer. So clearly is this understood, that one of the first lessons a prestidigitateur has to learn is to resist the natural tendency of the eyes to glance towards the hands in executing any necessary movement. In the present case, if the performer were to look towards the cards as he named them, the audience would look in that direction too, and noting the movements of the thumb, it would not be long before they guessed at least a portion of the secret. To avoid any risk of this, the better plan is, while the left hand is reading the cards, to take in the opposite hand the magic wand, professedly deriving your information from this quarter. In default of the wand, an indifferent card may be used in its stead, either answering the same purpose, viz., to draw your own eyes, and as a consequence those of the audience, in that direction, and away from the opposite hand. Further, the consultation of the performer with his supposed familiar enables the thumb to take its time, and to make sure of its conclusions before he announces them. The "patter" may run to something like the following effect :—

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have seen in the course of my performance one or two illustrations of the remarkable qualities of my wand, but you have not yet had a specimen of its extraordinary powers of divination. Here it is. It is not much to look at, I admit ; but it is as 'chockfull of science' as Sol Gills himself. I will give you an example. Here is a pack of cards. Shuffle them, please. Now I want half-a-dozen persons each to draw a card. Pass the pack on from one to another, and each take the very card you think I am least likely to find out. Retain your cards for the present, and take care that nobody, even your next neighbour, gets a sight of them. I shall now hold the pack in my left hand, and the drawn cards will be replaced, one at a time, in the middle.

I will not handle them, or even look at them, but the wand, held in my right hand, will tell me what each card is. Who drew the first card? Place it in the middle, please."

He opens the pack bookwise to receive it. When replaced, he brings it to the top by the Charlier pass* (see page 7), and forthwith proceeds to read it with the thumb, meanwhile addressing the wand in the right hand:—

"Now, wand, I want you to tell these ladies and gentlemen what the card is that has just been put back in the pack. You mustn't expect the wand to speak, ladies and gentlemen, though it can do pretty nearly everything else. Tho way it communicates with me is by means of little electric shocks, like the pricking of a pin. I generally feel them most on the back of the hand. Aha! I feel them now. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. The wand declares that the card was an eight. Is that correct, sir? Now I feel three more little taps: that is the signal for hearts; one tap for clubs, two for diamonds, three for hearts, four for spades. Your card was the eight of hearts."

"Another card, please. Put it in the middle of the pack. What is this card, wand? I feel a single tap. The card is an ace. Now the suit? Four more taps! That means spades. The ace of spades."

"Now another card. In the middle, please. Now, wand. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, *twelve*. Eleven taps for a knave, twelve for a queen, thirteen for a king. The wand declares that your card is a queen. But what queen? Two taps! The signal for diamonds. Your card was the queen of diamonds."

Even in the above comparatively simple form, the trick is sufficiently astonishing, but when the "punctuation," as it is called, is worked in conjunction with a pre-arranged pack, and with the aid of a special mnemonic contrivance which also forms part of the Charlier system, the marvel is enhanced ten-fold, and the knowledge displayed by the performer appears little short of diabolical.

* If the performer is unable to execute the pass in question, he may ask that the card may be replaced on the top of the pack, instead of in the middle, but the feat loses greatly by the alteration.

The key to the system lies in the "dial" depicted in Fig. 47—one of the most ingenious mnemonic contrivances ever devised; and unequalled, I may safely say, in the whole range of what may be called mental magic.

The characters arranged round the inner circumference of the dial correspond with the sequence of the *values* in the arranged pack, the sequence of the *suits* (club, heart, spade,

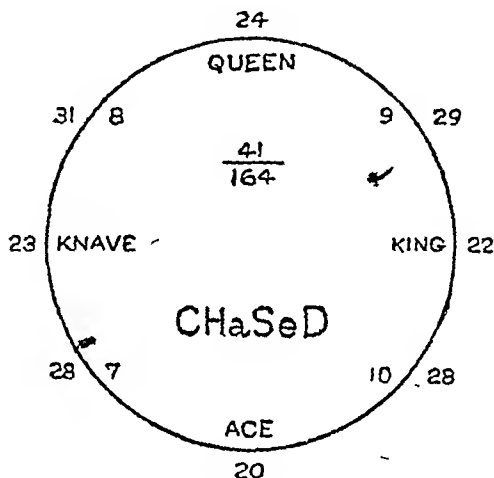


FIG 47.

diamond) being indicated by the consonants of the word CHASED, which is inscribed in the center.

In accordance with these indications, the pack is arranged as follows* :—

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ace of Clubs. | 5. Queen of Clubs. |
| 2. Seven of Hearts. | 6. Nine of Hearts. |
| 3. Knave of Spades. | 7. King of Spades. |
| 4. Eight of Diamonds. | 8. Ten of Diamonds. |

* To arrange the pack as above, take the ace of clubs, face upwards, in the left hand, and on it lay the seven of hearts, and so on. When the pack is turned over, the ace of clubs will be on the top, with the other cards following in due order.

The next card in regular order of sequence would be the ace of clubs, but that card has been already used. To meet this difficulty, the ace of the suit next preceding clubs, viz., hearts, is used in its place; in other words, the ace in each round is always of the same suit as the ten which immediately precedes it. The arrangement therefore will proceed as follows :—

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 9. Ace of Diamonds. | 21. Queen of Spades. |
| 10. Seven of Clubs. | 22. Nine of Diamonds. |
| 11. Knave of Hearts. | 23. King of Clubs. |
| 12. Eight of Spades. | 24. Ten of Hearts. |
| 13. Queen of Diamonds. | 25. Ace of Hearts. |
| 14. Nine of Clubs. | 26. Seven of Spades. |
| 15. King of Hearts. | 27. Knave of Diamonds. |
| 16. Ten of Spades. | 28. Eight of Clubs. |
| 17. Ace of Spades. | 29. Queen of Hearts. |
| 18. Seven of Diamonds. | 30. Nine of Spades. |
| 19. Knave of Clubs. | 31. King of Diamonds. |
| 20. Eight of Hearts. | 32. Ten of Clubs. |

It will be seen that there are thus *four* sections of *eight cards each*, answering to the eight indicators round the inner circumference of the dial. If we calculate the number of pips in each section, counting two (the actual number) for each court card, it will be found that their total is 41, made up as under :

$$1 + 7 + 2 + 8 + 2 + 9 + 2 + 10 = 41.$$

The total number of pips in the 32 cards will naturally be four times this number, or 164. In order to keep in mind these two numbers, they are accordingly inscribed within the dial, above the word which indicates the order of the suits.

We have still, however, to explain the signification of the various numbers set outside the circumference. These indicate *the total number of pips in the card against which they are set, and of the four next following it*. If we begin with a Knave,

for instance, the number of points on this and the four following cards are as under :—

$$2 + 8 + 2 + 9 + 2 = 23.$$

and accordingly we find the number 23 set against the knave. Starting with the nine, the points in that card and the four next following will be :—

$$9 + 2 + 10 + 1 + 7 = 29.$$

Accordingly, we find 29 set against that card ; and so on with the remaining six cards.

To make use of the dial, it must in the first place be committed to memory so perfectly that the mind shall picture it without effort, with each of its various indications. This achieved, and the performer provided with a pack of cards arranged in accordance with it, he will be able, after a very little practice, to name the card occupying any given position.

The first exercise should be to repeat, without hesitation, the whole 32 cards in succession, beginning with the original first card, the ace of clubs. When this is mastered, it will be equally easy to begin the naming process from any other starting point ; *i.e.*, from any other card at which the pack may happen to be cut. The next task of the aspirant will be to calculate the card standing at any required number from the top. As to some cards, indeed, there will be scarcely any need for calculation. He will merely have to picture to himself the dial, and apply certain fixed rules, as follows :—

1. The fifth card down (inclusive), will be the card which, on the dial, faces the first card. Thus, if the first card be an ace, the fifth will be a queen ; if the first be a seven, the fifth will be a nine ; if a knave, a king ; if an eight, a ten, *of the same suit*. With the remaining four cards of the circle, there will be a trifling variation, owing to the break of exact sequence at the ten-ace point. Thus, the fifth card forward from a queen will be an ace ; from a nine, a seven ; from a king, a knave ; from a ten, an eight ; but of *one suit back* in the agreed order of

the suits. For instance, the fifth card forward from the queen of hearts will be an ace, but of clubs ; the fifth card from the nine of spades will be the seven of hearts, and so on.

2. Again, the ninth card, inclusive, will be of the same *value* as the first, *but of the suit next preceding it*. Thus, if the top card be the queen of diamonds, the ninth will be the queen of spades ; if the first card be the eight of spades, the ninth will be the eight of hearts.

3. The seventeenth card will be of the same *value* and *colour* as the first ; *e.g.*, if the top card be the queen of diamonds, the seventeenth will be the queen of hearts, and so on.

4. The twenty-fifth card will be of the same value as the first card, *but of the suit next following* in the agreed order of the suits ; *e.g.*, if the first card be the queen of diamonds, the twenty-fifth will be the queen of clubs.

5. Knowing the top card, the performer will be equally well acquainted with the bottom card, which will be the one preceding it in order ; *e.g.*, if the top card be the queen of diamonds, the bottom card will be the eight of spades ; and the eighth, sixteenth and twenty-fourth cards will have the like relations to this card as the ninth, seventeenth and twenty-fifth have to the top card.

Making use of one or other of these cards as a new starting-point, it will be comparatively easy for the performer to calculate the card occupying any given position. Thus, taking, as before, the queen of diamonds as the top card for the time being, we will suppose that he is required to name the seventh, eighteenth and twenty-third cards. The seventh will be best reckoned from the fifth. "Queen" on the dial is faced by "ace." Reckoning one back in the order of the suits will give him the suit of the ace, which will be spades. The fifth card being the ace of spades, the sixth will be the seven of diamonds, and the seventh the knave of clubs. By Rule 3, the seventeenth card will be the queen of hearts, and the eighteenth will, therefore, be the nine of spades. The fifth card forward from this (the twenty-second) will, by rule 1, be the seven of hearts, and the twenty-third will be the knave of spades.

Sometimes it may be more convenient to reckon *backward* from a given card. Thus, suppose the performer is required to name the fifteenth card. The top card being (as we have assumed) the queen of diamonds, the bottom one will be the eight of spades, and therefore by Rule 5 the sixteenth card will be the eight of clubs. Reckoning one back from this gives us the fifteenth, the knave of diamonds.

Some practice will be necessary before the aspirant will be able to use the system with perfect ease, but when it is once mastered, he will be astonished at the facility with which he can name any required card.

The false shuffle described at page 28, (or some other which keeps the sequence of the cards unbroken), should be frequently used, and a spectator should now and then be invited to "cut." Under such circumstances it seems almost impossible to suppose that the feat depends on pre-arrangement of the pack; the more so that in the generality of tricks dependent upon such an arrangement, the performer must, after cutting, get a sight of the top or bottom card, or he is powerless. Here the performer does not look at a single card. Taking the pack in his left hand, and calling attention away from it as already explained, he reads the top card by feel, and thenceforth the position of every other card is known to him.

But he has as yet only exhibited half his powers. Having sufficiently demonstrated his knowledge of the whereabouts of particular cards, he invites some one to cut the pack, and to retain the portion removed, when he will inform him not only how many cards he has taken, but how many pips they contain.

This last information is obtained by means of a little simple mental arithmetic based on the indicating figures outside the circumference of the dial. We will suppose, as before, that the queen of diamonds is, for the time being, the top card. The pack having been cut and the upper portion retained by the person cutting, the performer secretly "reads" the top card of the remaining portion, which he finds to be, say, the ace of hearts; this will give him, as the *bottom* card of the portion taken, the ten of hearts. Meanwhile, he glances at the cards

removed, and makes a rough estimate of their quantity. He can see that they are more than eight, but less than sixteen, in number. They, therefore, represent once round the dial and a few over; but not twice round. Now from queen to eight, inclusive, is eight cards, and to these must be added a second queen, a nine, a king, and the final ten, four cards in all: $8 + 4 = 12$, which he accordingly announces as the number of cards taken. Next as to the number of pips in such cards. One round of the dial, wherever commencing, = 41 points; to these he adds 2 (for the queen), 9, 2 (for the king) and 10, or together, 23; $41 + 23 = 64$, and accordingly he announces with confidence 64 as the number of pips on the 12 cards taken.

The cut, however, will more often consist of about half the cards, so nearly perhaps that the performer cannot decide at sight whether the quantity taken is more or less than half. Let us suppose, for instance, that the top card of those left in his hand is the eight of clubs. The last-card of those taken by the spectator will therefore be the knave of diamonds. Now from queen to eight inclusive, once round the dial, is eight cards. A second time round to the eight would be sixteen cards, but knave in the dial just precedes eight, and the cards cut are short by the last mentioned card of the double round. It is, therefore, a safe assertion that fifteen cards have been taken, and that the number of pips contained in them is twice 41 (*i.e.* 82) - 8 = 74. Or the performer may with equal confidence declare that the cards left in his own hand are *seventeen* in number (one more than the double round), and contain $82 + 8 = 90$ pips.

Another mode of calculation, where the cut includes about half the cards, is to take mental note of the *sixteenth* card, and work backwards or forwards from this. Thus, in the case just supposed, the top card being the queen of diamonds, the bottom card will be the eight of spades, and the sixteenth card will be (by rule five) the eight of clubs. The knave of diamonds, which was the bottom card of the cut, is the card immediately preceding the eight of clubs. The double round is therefore short by this

one card, giving as before $16 - 1 = 15$, as the number of cards in the cut, and $82 - 8 = 74$ as the number of pips in such cards.

The system is by no means complicated, but it demands careful study, particularly at the outset; and, like most good things in this world, it is not to be acquired without a certain amount of labour. The feats dependent on it should be done well, and I would appeal to the student not to venture upon them in public till he *can* do them well. In the hands of Professor Charlier himself the "artificial spiritualism," as he called it, was less a conjuring trick than a miracle, and none who were privileged to witness his performances are ever likely to forget them. Part, no doubt, of their prestige was incommunicable. His tall gaunt form, his sparse lank hair, his thin pale lips and sardonic smile, his hollow close-shaved cheeks, his creeping gait, his bony fingers, and his small, keen grey eyes, made him the very ideal of a modern Mephistopheles; and I know that many of those who witnessed his marvels went away more than half impressed that there was something "not quite right" about his performances, and that he really possessed some clairvoyant power not vouchsafed to ordinary humanity. He had practised his system until its application had become second nature with him. The process of calculation was instantaneous. No sooner was the problem framed than the answer was announced, and it was invariably found to be correct.

To employ the system with full effect, a pack of cards, duly arranged, should be substituted at the right moment for the pack (of similar appearance) previously in use, which all present know to have been thoroughly shuffled. An occasional false shuffle, as already mentioned, will tend to confirm the audience in the conviction that the pack is not pre-arranged. The performer should commence by inviting the spectators to specify any number they please from one to thirty-two, when he will name the card which stands at such number. After

naming two or three cards in this way, having the pack "cut" each time, he will proceed to indicate quantity of cards taken, number of pips, &c., as last described.

He must, however, at any moment be prepared for a *contretemps*. The sequence of the cards may be accidentally disturbed, or some extra acute person, suspecting pre-arrangement, may ask to be allowed to shuffle for himself, and so break up the order. The performer cannot, of course, resist such a demand. In such case he will continue by naming cards, as described at page 58. In any case it is not well to prolong the trick too long; feats of divination, however marvellous, tending to weary an audience unless relieved by contrast with tricks of a different description.

CHAPTER V.

TRICKS DEPENDENT UPON SLEIGHT OF HAND.

FOR the higher flights of card conjuring, skill in sleight of hand is a *sine quâ non*, but if the aspirant has duly profited by the instructions contained in our second chapter, he should speedily be in a position to attempt them. When he has mastered the "force," the "palm," and the "pass," a large number of the best card tricks are already within his reach, and if he has in him any spark of the mystic fire, the spirit of the genuine sorcerer, the mastery of the "change" and other more delicate weapons of the conjurer will speedily follow.

A word of advice may here be usefully given to the neophyte: Don't be in too great a hurry to begin. Before attempting even the simplest trick as a whole, assure yourself, in the first place, that you have mastered the mechanical processes on which it depends. Perfection, of course, is not to be expected of a novice. *Ars longa*; the faultless execution of the high-class conjurer is the gradual growth of years. But without aspiring to emulate offhand the ease and elegance of the skilled professor, there is a certain rough finish which is within the reach of any intelligent person, and without which no one should attempt the public performance of any conjuring trick. The looking-glass will be the best guide of the tyro in this particular. So long as, in making the pass, for instance, the details of the process are visible to his own eyes, he may be quite sure that they will be visible to other people's.

And at the early stages of practice they will undoubtedly be visible, so much so, indeed, that he may be inclined to doubt whether they will ever be otherwise. But with perseverance the difficulty will disappear. The successive movements which the eye at first followed with such aggravating ease gradually combine into a sort of "flutter," by no means imperceptible, but no longer telling its own tale with such objectionable frankness. Gradually this flutter will become less and less perceptible, till the aspirant finds to his delight that it is, in a practical sense, visible no longer. Very often it happens that the acquirement of the coveted sleight seems to come unawares. The neophyte has toiled apparently without result. He seems to have made no advance whatever, and is half inclined to give up in despair, when suddenly, he knows not how or why, the difficulty has mysteriously disappeared, and thenceforth the seeming impossibility is an accomplished fact.

Having duly mastered the mechanical elements of the trick, the student may then proceed to attack it as a whole; and here he must carefully study, not only what he has to *do*, but what he has to *say*, in connection with it. Even the simplest trick requires its verbal accompaniment, or "patter," and upon this "patter," or "*boniment*," as it is called in French, depends the greater part of its effect. It would hardly be too much to say that the highest art of the conjurer is shown in the arrangement and delivery of his patter. The acquirement of skill in sleight of hand is a mere question of time and practice, but the framing of first-class patter demands far more exceptional qualifications.

Patter has many requirements to fulfil. Ostensibly, it is merely the conjurer's explanation of what he is doing or about to do, but its true functions go much further than this. To excite the interest of the spectator; to give the performer colourable excuses for needful actions; to divert the attention of the spectator from the mechanical processes by which the trick is worked; and, last, but not least, to account, after such plausible fashion, for the effect produced, that the spectator, uncon-

sciously surrendering his sober judgment, believes, for the time being, that the wizard has actually done the impossible thing which he has pretended to do ; such are the true functions of the patter of the Modern Magician.

By way of illustration of the nature and effect of the *boniment*, and of its artistic adaptation to the special circumstances of the case, I cannot do better than give a brief quotation from Robert-Houdin's "*Secrets de la Prestidigitation et de la Magie*." The subject of the anecdote is the familiar "Light and Heavy Chest."

"I used in my performances," says Robert-Houdin, "a little chest, which, placed on a certain spot among the spectators, became subject, at my pleasure, to the power of a magnetic current.

"This arrangement was, of course, kept a profound secret. I used to announce to my audience that my little chest would become light or heavy at my command, and I proved that such was the case, for at my will and pleasure a child could lift it without difficulty, or the strongest man failed to move it from its place. All that was needed was to make or break the electric current, unknown to the spectators.

"When I was sent to Algeria to give a series of performances before the Arabs, this little chest, which I had brought with me, did not seem likely to produce any great effect upon such uninstructed natures. The Arab would have simply made up his mind that there was some arrangement within which prevented the box from being moved, and would not have troubled himself to seek any further explanation.

"I determined to change my *boniment*, and, by means of a new fiction, I succeeded in giving the trick the appearance of a downright miracle.

"I came forward, box in the hand, to the middle of the 'run-down,'* which extended from my stage to the pit ; and there addressing myself to the Arabs :—

* The "run-down" is the temporary bridge erected to enable a conjurer to advance from the stage among his audience.

“ ‘From what you have already seen, you will have rightly inferred that I possess supernatural powers. I will now give you a fresh proof of my power, by showing you that I can take away the whole strength of the most robust man, and restore it to him at my will and pleasure. Let any one who thinks himself strong enough to venture on the experiment come forward.’

“This new *boniment*, as will be seen, put a new aspect on the matter, and gave the feat a totally different character. It was no longer mere conjuring—it was genuine magic.

“The result was extraordinary. The Arabs were so wonder-struck that they gave me credit for diabolical power.”

The performer will, in most cases, find himself compelled to arrange his patter for himself, for the most elaborate treatise could not afford space to give more than examples in this particular. In many respects, however, it will be found an advantage to invent one's own patter, inasmuch as, in the first place, it will be much more easily committed to memory; and in the second, it will harmonize better with the style and manner of the performer. Using another man's patter is like wearing another man's clothes. It will either sit upon the user

“Like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief,”

or, still less comfortably, like the dwarf's raiment stretched upon the giant's thews and sinews. One man is naturally jocose, another naturally grave. The latter, presenting his tricks as dependent on mysterious natural principles, will use a sober *boniment*, well spiced with scientific jargon. The low-comedy man will treat his tricks as a series of practical jokes, and aim merely at getting as much fun out of the performance as possible. Each may be excellent in his way, but if either were to use the *boniment* of the other, the result would be a dismal failure.

The patter should be carefully written out and committed to memory. The performer may vary it as much as he pleases in

use, but in the early stages of his magical experience he will find that he has plenty to think about in looking after the working details of the trick, without being compelled to manufacture *extempore* "talkee-talkee" in addition. A thorough mastery of his patter is also an immense aid in giving the performer confidence, and this is a most important point. If his manner is bright, cheerful, confident, his high spirits will at once communicate themselves to his audience. If, on the contrary, he looks worried, anxious, ill at ease, a wave of depression will just as surely pass over the spectators.

With this little preamble I will proceed to describe a very effective sleight-of-hand trick, first in its naked form, and then with appropriate "patter." We will call it—

The Obedient Aces.—The effect of the trick is as follows:—The four aces are taken out of the pack; the two black are handed to one member of the company, whom we will call A., and the two red aces to another, whom we will call B. A. is invited to replace one of those he holds (say the ace of clubs) upon the top of the pack, and B. to place one of his (say the ace of hearts) in the middle. At the performer's command they are found to have changed places. The ace of hearts is found on the top, and the ace of clubs in the middle. Again they are placed, one at the top, the other at the bottom of the pack. "Pass," says the performer, and lo! they are in the middle. "Pass," says the performer once more, and again they are at top and bottom.

All four aces are now brought into use. The two red aces are placed at top and bottom, and the two black ones in the middle. "Presto," says the performer, and their positions are reversed. "Presto," once more, and all four are found in the middle.

So much for the dry bones of the trick, which, as thus anatomically described, sounds commonplace enough. With the assistance of well-arranged patter, however, it becomes a really striking illusion. The performer may begin as follows:—

"Permit me to introduce to your notice, ladies and gentle-

men, my trained pack of cards. There is nothing very remarkable about their appearance. They look like a perfectly ordinary pack of cards, and, in point of fact, they *are* a perfectly ordinary pack; their only distinguishing feature is that I have had them for some time, and that their natural intelligence has been cultivated by education. You didn't know that cards had any natural intelligence? Oh dear, yes! Some of them are very clever indeed. This is a very intelligent pack; so much so that now I never think of performing a card trick myself. I just intimate to the cards what is wanted, and *they* do the trick without troubling me at all in the matter. You don't believe it? Fortunately I need not ask you to take my word for it. I will give you ocular demonstration that what I say is correct. I will take out four cards of the same value. I generally take the aces, as being the most conspicuous,* but, if you prefer it, I will take any four other cards—it is all the same to me. The aces are approved? Then I will hand the two black aces to this gentleman (A.), and the two red aces to this lady (B). Will some other person kindly examine the pack, and testify that there is no other ace in it? Thank you.

"Now, sir" (to A.), "will you be kind enough to place one of the cards you hold on the top of the pack? Good! And now, madam, will you place one of your two cards here in the middle?" Here the performer opens the pack bookwise with the left thumb, in readiness for the Chariot pass (see page 7). "Thank you. We have the ace of clubs on the top, and the ace of hearts in the middle." Here he makes the pass, but to the eye of the spectator he appears merely to have closed the pack, just opened to receive the card. "Now I am going to order these two cards to change places, but remember what I told you. I am not going to perform the trick; the cards will do that for themselves. 'Go!'" With the third finger of the left hand he makes the "click" described at page 31.

* This, for once, is the genuine reason. Four kings or queens may be used instead, if preferred, but the aces are more distinctive, and more readily recognized at a distance.

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All four aces are now brought into use. The two red aces are placed at top and bottom, and the two black ones in the middle. "Presto," says the performer, and their positions are reversed. "Presto," once more, and all four are found in the middle.

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“Now, sir” (to A.), “will you be kind enough to place one of the cards you hold on the top of the pack? Good! And now, madam, will you place one of your two cards here in the middle?” Here the performer opens the pack bookwise with the left thumb, in readiness for the Chalker pass (see page 7). “Thank you. We have the ace of clubs on the top, and the ace of hearts in the middle.” Here he makes the pass, but to the eye of the spectator he appears merely to have closed the pack, just opened to receive the card. “Now I am going to order these two cards to change places, but remember what I told you. I am not going to perform the trick; the cards will do that for themselves. ‘Go!’” With the third finger of the left hand he makes the “click” described at page 31.

* This, for once, is the genuine reason. Four kings or queens may be used instead, if preferred, but the aces are more distinctive, and more readily recognized at a distance.

"Did you hear a little chirping sound? That was the two cards changing places. See for yourselves that I have not deceived you. Here is the ace of hearts on the top; and here, right in the middle, is the ace of clubs." (He hands back these two cards to the holders).

"It does not matter how far the cards may be apart. This time we will place one on the top, and the other at the bottom." (This is done accordingly.) "Observe, I don't touch the cards." (He waves the right hand as if in confirmation of his remark, and, under cover of this movement, which draws all eyes to the right hand, he makes with the left the single-handed pass, thereby bringing both cards to the centre.) "This time I will order both cards to pass to the middle. 'Go!'" Again the little "click" is heard. He shows that the aces are neither at top or bottom; then turning up the faces of the cards, runs them over till he comes to the missing cards, which he shows to be together. While doing this, he slips the little finger between the two cards, and having sufficiently exhibited them, makes (without turning over the cards) the *two*-handed pass, and then turns them over. "If I want them back again as at first I have only to say 'Come!'" (he makes the "click" once more), "and they instantly return, as you see, to their original situations." He shows that they are again at top and bottom.

"I will give you a further proof that the cards themselves perform the trick, by using four instead of two. I need hardly tell you that no conjurer, however dexterous, could possibly manipulate four cards at once. This time we will have the two black aces placed at top and bottom" (this is done), "and the two red ones placed in the middle." He opens the pack bookwise. "One at the top of the lower heap, please, and one at the bottom of the upper heap." (This is done accordingly, and the single-handed pass made as before.)* "Remember the arrangement, please. The two black aces at top and

* If the performer prefers it, he can here use the two-handed pass, first introducing the little finger *between* the two red aces, so that they may be at top and bottom after the pass is made.

bottom, and the two red ones in the middle. Change!" He makes the "click" as before, and shows that the change has taken place; the red aces being now at top and bottom, and the black ones in the middle.

"I saw you watching me very narrowly, but I don't think you quite saw how that was done, so I will do it just once more, and ask the cards to go very slowly, so that you may be able to follow the whole process." (He hands back the cards to their respective holders) "Now, just as before. The ace of spades at the bottom, and the ace of clubs at the top. Now the other two aces in the middle."

The cards are lying across the palm of the left hand, and the performer cuts them by lifting off, *apparently*, the upper portion with his right. Here, however, a new sleight is introduced. Holding the cards in the left hand in the usual way, the operator opens them bookwise with the thumb, on the side next the tips of the fingers. They are thus divided into two packets. At the same moment he brings the right hand over them, as directed for the two-handed pass, and clips the lower packet between the second finger and thumb of that hand, and therewith draws out this packet to the right, and holds it just above the other. To the eye of the spectator he has merely "cut" the cards. In reality he has already made the pass, the original positions of the two heaps being reversed. When the two red aces are now put in the middle, they are really placed *between* the two black aces. The trick is now done. He lets the packet fall on the lower, and offers the pack to a spectator.

"Take the pack into your own hands, sir. The cards will do their duty in your hands just as well as in mine. I shall now order all four cards to come together in the middle. Pass! Did you feel them go? No? That is strange, but you will certainly find that they have done so. Examine the top and bottom cards. The aces have departed, have they not? Now look in the middle, and you will find all four together." The pack is examined, and such is found to be the case.

The foregoing may form a suitable introduction to a still more startling feat, known, from the wizard who has the credit of having invented it, as—

Conus' Ace Trick.—At the conclusion of some other trick in which the aces have played a prominent part, the performer invites the assistance of some gentleman upon the platform. "Very intelligent cards, the aces," he remarks. "What you have just seen is pretty well, but they will do much more extraordinary things than that. I can make them fly out of your hand, and come back to the pack. What do you think of that?" The gentleman naturally replies that he will know better what to think when he has seen the thing done. "Quite right," says the performer, replacing the four aces on the top of the pack, making the "ruffle," and then taking them off again (without showing them), and placing them face downwards on the table. "Here they are. Put your hand firmly upon them, and don't let one of them escape. You are sure you have them safely?"

The victim, who has taken note of the performer's manœuvres, and suspects that the sound of the "ruffle" covered some deceptive manipulation, answers boldly that he has four cards, but he is not by any means sure that they are the four aces.

"You are not sure that they are the aces! My dear sir, do you think I would take such a mean advantage of you? Allow me!"

He turns up the four cards, shows that they are the aces, and again replaces them on the pack. Meanwhile, he has slipped the little finger of the left hand beneath the next following card. He repeats the "ruffle," but quietly, as if desirous of avoiding observation, and then takes them off again, and with them this top card. He waves them with a careless gesture, so as to show this card, remarking "Of course it is for you to see that I do *not* change the cards. But when I do, rest assured that you will not know anything at all about the matter."

So saying, he replaces the five cards on the pack; then counts

off the aces, one by one, still face downward. "Are you satisfied *now*?"

The gentleman who has caught sight, as he was intended to do, of the fifth card, naturally says that he is *not* satisfied. Sometimes, however, it happens that a morbidly amiable person, fearful of spoiling the trick, professes himself satisfied that he *has* got the aces. This does not suit the performer's purpose, but he is prepared for such an emergency.

"That's right, I am glad you are beginning to feel more confidence in me. Does any one doubt that these are the aces? This gentleman is prepared to bet, to any reasonable amount, that he has them safely."

This usually calls forth a shout of derision from the audience, many of whom have also noticed the exposed card, and are fully persuaded that the cards on the table are *not* the aces. In any case the volunteer assistant is sure to declare with energy that he is *not* prepared to bet upon the subject; and that in point of fact he entertains a very strong doubt whether the cards he holds are the aces.

During this little scene, the performer has secretly palmed off *five* cards (pushed forward by the left thumb one after another), and holds these concealed in the right hand. He assumes an injured air.

"Really, sir, you are very hard to satisfy, and till you *are* satisfied that you have *bonâ fide* possession of the aces, I cannot proceed with my experiment." Once more he turns over the four cards, and shows that they really are the aces, then turns them again face downwards, and picking them up with the right hand, places them on the top of the pack. In so doing he secretly leaves the five palmed cards on the top of them.

"Now sir," he enquires, holding the pack daintily between finger and thumb, "where are the aces now?"

"On the top," is the natural reply.

"Good, so far! Then please see that I place them fairly on the table."

He deals off, one after another, the four top cards, carelessly

taking off, and replacing, the card which next follows, and which is seen not to be an ace. "Let me show you further that there are no more aces in the pack." So saying, he holds up the cards with their faces to the company, and runs them rapidly over, taking care however not to display the five hindmost cards, four of which are the aces. This mancenvre effectually persuades the audience and the volunteer assistant that the four cards on the table are really the aces.

"Now, sir, be good enough to place your hand firmly on these cards; and yet, however tightly you may hold them, I will undertake to take them out of your hand, and bring them back to the pack. Or better still, they shall not pass back to the pack, but appear here on the table. Of course I must send you other cards in exchange." While saying the last few words, he has taken off, and carelessly shown the top card of the pack, which, as the reader will remember, is not an ace; and while still moving it about, "changes" it by the *first* method* for the card next following, which is an ace. He draws this across the hand of the gentleman who is holding the cards on the table. "First ace, come." He then turns it up and shows that he is obeyed. He takes (without showing) the next card (which is an ace), and shows it in like manner. "Second ace, come." Similarly for the third. "Third ace, come," and shows that it has done so.

As to the fourth ace, which is still left on the top, he varies the mode of procedure; taking instead, a card haphazard from some other part of the pack, showing it carelessly, and then "changing" it for the top card. "It is all the same to me what card I take. One is just as good as another. Fourth ace, come! Here it is, you see; and we now have the tale complete" (showing them),—"ace of hearts, ace of spades, ace of clubs, ace of diamonds. Now, sir, be good enough to examine the cards in your hand, and testify to the company that the aces have really left them." The victim turns up the four

* This mode of change is the most appropriate, inasmuch as the changed card is thereby left at the bottom, and so got out of the way.

cards he holds, and is compelled to admit that in spite of his precautions, the aces have really departed.

Conns was accustomed to introduce a humorous sequel to the above trick, known as—

The Shower of Aces.—The performer has ready to hand, either at the back of his table, or in a *pochette*, a second pack consisting entirely of aces. These, during the general surprise occasioned by the completion of the last trick, he gets into his hand, and adds to the ordinary pack, but in such manner that they shall face the ordinary cards. The aces first used he places in the middle of the pack, keeping, however, the pack as much screened by the hand as possible, that its increased bulk may not be noticed. The volunteer assistant is about to retire, but he stops him.

"Stay, sir," he says, "I should like to give you another proof of the obedience of the aces. You have just seen me place them in the middle of the pack. At what number would you like them to appear? You have only to say 'Now.'"

As he speaks, he deals off the first three or four cards from the upper end of the pack. "Now," says the spectator. "Good! here they are," replies the performer, at the same time "turning over" the pack, and beginning to deal from the opposite end. "By the way, how many would you like?"

The audience naturally interpret this enquiry as meaning four or less, but it not unfrequently happens that the volunteer assistant, with the idea of scoring off the Professor, plays into his hands by naming a larger number, say "five."

"Five?" retorts the performer, "that is rather unreasonable, considering that there are only four in the pack; but if you really wish for five I daresay I can oblige you. One, two, three, four, five!" and he deals out five aces accordingly. "Would you like any more? here they are—six, seven, eight, nine, ten! Any more? Eleven, twelve, thirteen! I have plenty, you see, but if I were to run short I could very easily find some. See!" So saying, he deftly separates and palms off the remainder of the aces, and, thrusting his hand within the waistcoat of his victim,—“Here are plenty, you see,”

produces them one at a time, and throws them on the floor or table. When the victim at last, appalled by this deluge of cards, makes an effort to retreat, his troubles are not yet over, for the performer, rapidly picking up and palming a few of the cards, shakes a shower, apparently, out of his coat tails.

The "turning-over" of the pack above referred to is a sleight not very often used, but occasionally very handy, and every card conjurer should therefore have a practical acquaintance with it. It is performed as follows:—The cards are held in the left



FIG. 48.

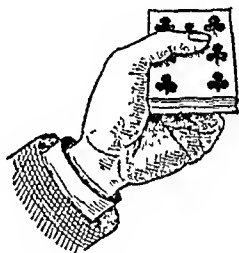


FIG. 49

hand, as shown in Fig. 48, with the fingers only slightly projecting beyond their upper edge, and the thumb beneath, pressing against their under surface. By a sudden increase of this pressure the cards are made to revolve, as shown by the dotted line, and assume the position shown in Fig. 49. The fingers are then extended, and the pack falls into the palm. If the movement be neatly executed, and covered by a swing of the arm, it is practically invisible.

Bertram's Ace Trick.—The genial wizard, Bertram, of Egyptian Hall celebrity, one of the most skilful of sleight of hand performers, exhibits a special version of the four-ace trick, which never fails to "bring down the house."

Securing the assistance of some gentleman on the plat-

form, he requests him to pick out the four aces. While he is thus occupied the performer exclaims :—"Excuse me, sir! that won't do! you have taken one of my cards already!" So saying, he thrusts his hand into the breast-pocket of the victim, thereby introducing *five* cards previously palmed, and brings out *one* of them only, the other four remaining in the pocket.

When the assistant has picked out the four aces, the performer places them on the top of the pack, and then deals them in a row, face downwards, on the table. He asks his victim whether he is certain that those are really the four aces. He naturally replies that he is not. After a little chaff, the performer invites him to turn them up and replace them himself in the pack. He does so. The performer meanwhile has palmed off three cards; and, with a careless movement, brings them over the four aces on the top of the pack. He makes ready to deal again, but checks himself, and says :—"But perhaps you will be more satisfied if you deal for yourself; please to lay out the four cards in a row, as I did." This is done, as under :—

1 2 3 4

1, 2 and 3 are the three palmed cards, but 4 is an ace, and the three other aces are now uppermost on the pack. "Now, sir, please place three more cards on this one" (indicating 4). "Now three more on this one" (3). "Now three on this" (2), "and three on this" (1). "Now, sir, here are four packets, each consisting of an ace and three other cards; they have been dealt by yourself, so you may be quite sure that there is no hanky-panky about the matter. Which of these packets would you like?"

At this point we find exemplified an equivocal of constant use in conjuring. The assistant chooses two heaps, which may or may not include No. 4. If they do *not* include No. 4, the performer picks them up and calmly places them on the pack, with the remark. "That disposes of two," or words to that effect. If the chosen two *do* include No. 4, he picks up

the non-chosen pair and adds them in like manner, but without remark, to the pack. He then asks his assistant to choose one of the two remaining heaps, and replaces in the pack such one of them (whether chosen or non-chosen), as shall leave heap No. 4 still on the table. Requesting the assistant to place his hand firmly on these cards, he tells him that he shall now take away his three small cards, and send him aces in their place. He accordingly makes believe to take three indifferent cards (previously palmed) one after another from him, then, saying "Now I shall send you the aces," "ruffles" the pack, over his hand, and invites him to turn up the four cards he holds, which are found to be all aces. Placing the indifferent cards on the top of the pack, and again making the ruffle, he orders these cards to pass into the pocket of his "subject," where three cards are accordingly found.

Clairvoyance by Touch.—This is a very pretty drawing-room trick, and scarcely less effective on the stage. I will describe it with its accompaniment of "patter," to which, like most feats, it owes the best half of its prestige.

"Ladies and gentlemen, there is a popular idea that conjuring depends mainly upon swiftness of movement, or, in popular phrase, the quickness of the hand deceiving the eye. To prove to you that such is not the case, I propose to show you a little experiment involving no dexterity whatever; but simply dependent upon a highly cultivated sense of touch. Here is a pack of cards, which any one is at liberty freely to shuffle. I shall then ask some lady to draw a card; (take the pack into your own hands, madam, and choose where you please)—and, after looking at it, to lay it face downwards, upon the palm of her left hand, while I count seven. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Thank you, madam. Now be kind enough to replace the card in the pack."

Performer opens the pack bookwise to receive the card, and when replaced, brings it, by means of the pass, to the top. He palms it off with the right hand, and while offering the

pack, with the same hand, to be shuffled, gets sight and takes note of the card (see page 18).

"Will some one once more shuffle the cards, so that the chosen card may be thoroughly mixed with the rest?" (He hands the cards to be shuffled as above mentioned, and when they are returned, replaces the palmed card on the top.) "Now I shall have to ask the assistance of some gentleman with an inside breast-pocket. Thank you, sir. Empty the pocket, please, and allow me to place this pack of cards in it. Take care of them, please. I hold you responsible that no one meddles with them in any way. Now, madam, you are probably not aware of it, but that card, even in the short time it has lain on your palm, has left a picture of itself upon it. That is why I always ask the assistance of a *lady* in this experiment;—the palm being softer and more delicate, the picture is better defined. You can't see anything? Quite right; the picture I speak of is not visible to the eye, but it is quite perceptible to the touch. You don't believe me, I see, but I will speedily prove my assertion. Allow me, madam, to touch your hand for one moment." (He lays his own palm on the lady's, and retains that position for a few seconds.) "A remarkable clear impression, madam, so much so, that I almost wonder you can't feel it yourself. The card you drew, and of which there is now a perfect picture on your palm, is (*say*) the knave of clubs. I am right, I think? Yes, the knave of clubs!

"But I have yet another curious effect to show you. The little process we have gone through has established a mesmeric sympathy between my hand and the card, and though it has been thoroughly shuffled with the pack, and the whole placed in total darkness in that gentleman's breast-pocket, I have only to dip my hand in the pocket and the card will at once come into my hand. Permit me, sir." (Dips hand into pocket, and produces card.) "Here it is, you see. It came into my hand at once; the knave of clubs."

The last feat hardly demands any explanation. As the card was replaced on the top of the pack before placing in the pocket, and the cards have not since been disturbed, the finding it

is a very easy matter. The performer resumes, addressing the gentleman in whose pocket the cards were deposited :—

“You saw how that was done, sir? I observed that you watched me very carefully. No; you don’t know how it was done? Then I shall be very happy to show you, in return for your kind assistance. Hand me the pack, and come with me.

“Which lady would you prefer as the subject of the experiment? This lady? Good. Then, madam, will you be kind enough to take one of these cards, and allow it to lie on the palm of your left hand? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! That will do. Now return it to the pack, please!” (Pass, and palm off, as before.) “Now, sir, shuffle the cards well, and then” (replacing the card) “we will place them in your pocket as before.” (This is done, the performer taking care that the top of the pack is placed *outwards*.)

“Now let us see whether we can discover the card. Madam, will you kindly allow this gentleman to touch your palm for one moment? Lay your palm flat on the lady’s, sir, and take careful note of the impression. What card is it? You can’t tell? I’m afraid you haven’t a very delicate sense of touch. Allow me, madam.” (Touch palm.) “Why, it’s as plain as possible. The card you drew, madam, was (*say*) the seven of hearts.”

It is admitted that such was the case. Meanwhile, the performer pats his volunteer assistant cheerfully on the back. “Don’t be discouraged, my dear sir. I have now performed this experiment eleven thousand times, and the first seven thousand I was wrong every time, so there’s a chance for you yet. By the way, although you have failed in reading the impression on the lady’s palm, you may still be able to manage the magnetic part of the trick. Touch the lady’s hand once more, just to freshen up the mesmeric influence, and then, before the fluid has time to escape, put your hand into your pocket, and take out the lady’s card. You’ll have no trouble; it will come into your hand of its own accord.”

The assistant dips his hand into his pocket, and following your instructions, which practically tell him to take the first card that comes to hand, instinctively takes the outermost card,

which is the right one. "There it is, you see; you haven't to think at all about it, it is bound to be right; the card takes care of that; the seven of hearts."

To Pass a Card through a Hat.—This is a very simple little trick, but well performed, often produces more effect than many more ambitious illusions. It is scarcely important enough to form an independent item of a programme, but will be found particularly useful in the event (which happens now and then in the experience of every conjurer) of a failure to force the desired card for the purpose of some other trick. In certain tricks it is essential that pre-arranged cards be forced. On the other hand, a conjurer now and then meets with a person who, either from awkwardness or perversity, resists all his blandishments, and persists in drawing a wrong card. In such a case an experienced performer does not feel the least embarrassment. He simply leaves the "wrong" card in the hands of the drawer, completes the trick with the assistance of some more complaisant person, and then, returning, takes the surplus card, and with it performs some minor trick, as for instance the one which I am about to describe.

The card having been drawn, and replaced in the pack, the performer makes the pass (single-handed or two-handed) to bring it to the top, palms it, and hands the pack to be shuffled. Meanwhile, taking a borrowed hat, he grasps it, fingers inside, thumb outside, with the same hand that holds the card, which is thereby brought against the lining. Waving it carelessly about, so that the spectators cannot but see that it is empty, he brings it mouth downwards on the table, simultaneously working the card forward with the fingers. When the hand is withdrawn the card falls beneath the hat and remains covered by it. Taking the pack in the right hand, he says, "Will you now, sir, be good enough to tell the company what card you drew, and I will forthwith pass it through the hat." The card is stated to be, say, the king of hearts. The performer says "King of hearts, pass!" bringing the pack down smartly over the hat, and making the single-handed ruffle so that the

cards, in escaping from the fingers, strike the crown. He then puts aside the pack, and lifts the hat with both hands, one on each side of the crown. Beneath it, face upwards, is seen the selected card.

The Ladies' Looking-Glass.—This trick was so christened by Comte, a celebrated French conjurer and ventriloquist, who flourished under Louis XVIII., and with whom it was a special favourite. Why he so called it, nobody knows, but the title has a pleasant sound, and as no one has ever suggested a better, it may remain.

In effect the trick is briefly as follows :—The pack having been shuffled, the performer invites four persons each to select two cards from it, and to replace them in the pack, which is again shuffled at each stage. Showing the top and bottom cards, he asks if those are the cards chosen by any one, and is told that they are not. He then undertakes to produce the several pairs chosen, one after another, in those positions, and does so as to the first three pairs; producing the last pair by throwing the cards in the air, and catching the two cards as they fall.

The usual style of patter runs to something like the following effect :—“Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose to give you a further proof of the good discipline of this pack of cards. May I ask some lady to draw a couple of them? Anywhere you please. And you, madam, two more. And you, madam. And this lady will perhaps take two more, making in all eight cards.”

(We will distinguish the four ladies, in order, by the letters A, B, C, D.) The performer continues :—

“And now, madam” (to D), “having taken note of your cards I will ask you to put them back here in the middle of the pack.” (He re-opens pack for that purpose, makes the pass, and palms off the two cards). “Now will some gentleman shuffle thoroughly? “Thank you, sir.” (Replaces cards, and makes pass to bring them to the middle,* so that the next pair may be placed on the

* The form of pass described at page 75 will be found very suitable

top of them). "And now, madam" (to C), "will you replace your two cards?" He again makes the pass, bringing all four cards to the top and executes a false shuffle, leaving them still on the top; then again bring them to the middle by the pass. (To B): "Replace your two cards, madam, please,—and now" (to A) "yours."* The cards are once more brought to the top by the pass, and either shuffled by the performer himself (a "false shuffle" as before) or palmed off, and the pack handed to some one else to do so. This done, the performer slips the bottom card to the top of the pack. This card will therefore now be uppermost, with the eight chosen cards next following. Of course the cards last returned will be first in order.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," says the performer, "I am going to attempt a very difficult feat. I am going to call these four pairs of cards, which you have seen so well shuffled with the rest, successively to the top and bottom of the pack. First, however, let us make sure that none of them are there already." (He holds the pack upright in the hand, and shows the bottom card). "Does this card belong to anybody?" (All shake their heads.) "Or this card?"

Holding the pack in the left hand, he takes off and exhibits, with finger and thumb of right, the top card, which is likewise disowned, and he replaces it accordingly. Meanwhile, however, he has pushed forward with the left thumb the next following card, (which, it will be remembered, is one of A's pair) and inserted the little finger beneath it. In replacing the card just shown, he makes the pass, and brings these two cards to the bottom. The effect of this is that the card just shown at top is now last but one, while one of A's cards is at the bottom, and the other left on the top of the pack.

"It is clear," says the performer, "that neither of the drawn

for this purpose To all appearance the performer has merely "cut" the cards haphazard.

* The precise order in which the cards are replaced is a matter of indifference, provided that the performer duly notes their succession, and calls for them in reverse order, i.e., the cards last replaced must be called for first, and so on

cards is either at top or bottom at present, but I shall compel them to pass successively to those positions." (To A): "Madam, will you be good enough to name your two cards."—The lady names (we will suppose) the nine of diamonds and the ten of hearts.—"See; I just shake the cards like this" (he introduces the "click," or any appropriate gesture), "and say 'come.' Here is one of your cards, the nine of diamonds, at the bottom, and here, on the top" (he shows it accordingly, and at the same time inserts the little finger under the card next following), "is the ten of hearts."

Again he makes the pass, and brings two cards to the bottom of the pack. B's cards are now at top and bottom, and may be shown accordingly. He proceeds in like manner with C's, but after showing the top card passes to the bottom *that card only*, without the one next following, and lays the pack aside, as if the trick was concluded. He is naturally reminded that he has not exhibited D's cards. He takes up the pack again, remarking, "Really I am very sorry, madam, but I thought I had shown all the cards that were drawn. I am afraid it will not be easy to find yours now."

While making this remark he "passes" the now top card to the bottom, but in so doing turns it so as to face the rest of the pack;* then raises his right hand, as if in reflection, to his mouth, and secretly moistens the tips of his fingers. He resumes: "I am afraid I shall not be able to reproduce your cards by the same method, for having once put the pack out of my hand, there is no knowing where they may have strayed to. But there are plenty of ways of finding them. Perhaps the easiest will be to throw the pack in the air and catch them as they fall."

So saying, and holding the cards upright between the fingers and thumb of right hand (pressing simultaneously on front

* The best way to do this, in the case of a single card, is simply to draw the top card off with the second and third fingers (left hand), and with the right hand to make the pack describe a quarter-turn on its longer axis.

and back), he gives them an upward jerk into the air. All fly from the hand save the top and bottom cards, which are retained by the greater friction of the moistened thumb and fingers. Still holding these tightly, he makes a dash at the falling cards, which are thereby scattered in all directions, then opens the fingers, when the two cards remain adhering to them, having apparently been caught from the midst of the falling shower.

Everybody's Card.—This is a feat which should not be attempted until the student has acquired considerable mastery of sleight of hand. It is further only suitable in a fairly large assembly, where those who take part are too far distant from each other to see the card which each draws, or to compare notes upon the subject. It is worked as follows :—

The pack having been shuffled, invite a person to draw one (using full freedom of choice), and to hand it back to you. Remark, "I will place your card here upon the table," and, apparently do so, but in transit "change" the drawn card, which we will suppose to be the knave of hearts, for the top card, and place that card on the table, face downwards, instead. The method of change used should be the *second*, which it will be remembered leaves the changed card on the *top* of the pack.

Make the pass to bring the knave of hearts to the centre, and "force" it on another person at some little distance. Remark, "This card also I will place upon the table," and apparently do so, "changing" it as before.

Again bring the knave of hearts to the middle, and force it on a third person.* Remark, "This, too, we will place upon the table," and actually do so.

* Should there be any difficulty in forcing the right card at either of these stages, the performer need not feel any embarrassment. He will simply leave the card actually drawn in the possession of the drawer, and pass on to a more complaisant person. The "failure" will then be treated as the *fourth* card.

Again offer the pack, with the request to take a card (freely chosen), leaving the card so drawn in the possession of the drawer. Step to the table and pick up the three cards there placed. They consist of the knave of hearts, which has been thrice drawn, and two indifferent cards, say the seven of spades and nine of diamonds. Say, "We have here the three cards that have been drawn. Your card, your card, and your card," addressing, in succession, the three persons who drew. Each readily assents, for he sees the knave of hearts, which he himself drew, and he naturally assumes that the other two cards were those drawn by the other persons. "Good," says the performer, placing the three cards on the top of the pack, the knave of hearts uppermost. He then takes the fourth card, (which we will suppose to be the queen of clubs) from the person who drew it, and glancing at it, says, "And you, sir, drew the queen of clubs. Now I am going to attempt a very extraordinary feat. I intend to change this card—the queen of clubs, I think you said—into each of the three cards drawn by those three other gentlemen." Under cover of this remark he has already "changed" the queen of spades for the knave of hearts, but by the *first* method (see page 19), leaving the queen at the bottom. Advancing to the first person who drew, he makes a "click" on the back of the card, as described at page 32, and says, "The card is no longer the queen of hearts. It is now your card, sir." The fact is admitted, and he steps up to the second person, and repeats the "click." "Change! It is now *your* card." In like manner with the third person, after which he "changes" the card for the now top card. "Change! And now, you see, it is nobody's card."

If preferred, the original change of the queen of spades to the knave of hearts can be made by the *second* method, leaving the former card on top of the pack. In such case, when the final "change" is made, the card will again be the queen of spades, and the performer may conclude, "And now it is again this gentleman's card, as at first."

If the performer has not mastered the click, as described for

a single card, he may simply blow upon the card to account for the change, but this is scarcely so effective.

Cards Judged by Weight, and the Multiplication of Cards.—Secretly count a certain number, say fourteen, of the uppermost cards of the pack, and insert the little finger between these and the remaining cards.* Then, addressing some person of the company, say, "I want you to take a few of these cards, as many as you like." So saying, you offer the pack, and slide off the counted cards into his hand. He will usually accept what you give him without demur, not being aware that you have a preference for any particular number, but if, *par exception*, he should insist on taking a few more or a few less, you can readily compute the actual number.

Remark, "I am about to attempt a very difficult feat, but it is one in which I rarely make a mistake. I am going to guess by weight how many cards you have left me." You take the remaining cards on the palm, and make believe to weigh them. "Unless I am much mistaken, I have here exactly eighteen cards. As there are thirty-two cards in the pack, if I am right, you must have taken fourteen cards. Please see if that is so." The cards are counted, and the number found to be correct. Meanwhile, you have palmed off four of the cards you hold, and gathering together the cards just counted (but without picking them up), you add these to them, and continue, "Now I want you to gather together those fourteen cards, and place your hand firmly upon them. How many shall I add to them? You must not ask for too many, for every card adds to the difficulty. Say three, or four."

The inherent avarice of human nature generally causes the selection of the larger number, in which case the trick is done. You ruffle the cards in your hand, say "presto" or "pass," and invite the holder to assure himself that he has now eighteen

* Or press the two ends of the pack together, and make a good strong "bridge" at this point. By the use of this expedient the performer is enabled not only to count the cards beforehand, but, if need be, to lay the pack out of his hand on the table; a decided advantage

cards. But it is possible that he may name a smaller number, say "three." In such case you request him to give you back one of the cards in his hand, that it may show the others the way. If he decides for two only, you may either ask for *two* to show the way, or you may remark, "Two only? you are very easily satisfied. Would any one else like a couple?" Some one is sure to say "yes," and you are relieved from all difficulty. If *one* only is asked for, you may invite two or three other persons to have one also, and the tale is found to be correct. Meanwhile you have palmed three more cards, and add them to the heap just counted. "It's perfectly easy," you remark, "if you only know how it's done. This time I shall send you three more. Pass." (Ruffle.) "Count again, please, and you will find that you have now twenty-one;" which is found to be the case.

As above described, the trick is somewhat crude and amateurish. Robert-Houdin was accustomed to perform a somewhat similar feat, but with infinitely greater effect. As with all Robert-Houdin did, the greater "finish" of the illusion will at once be noticeable.

The performer advances with a pack of cards, still enveloped in its wrapper, and having, palmed in the same hand, three other cards of similar pattern. He invites a spectator to tear open the wrapper and verify the number of the cards, which is found to be, as usual in a piquet pack, 32. He then invites the same person to cut the pack into two fairly equal portions, and to choose which he pleases for himself. This is done. "Now, sir," says the performer, "be good enough to count the heap you have chosen, and see how many you have. Fifteen? A very good number. Now be good enough to take these fifteen cards into your own hands."

As he says the words "these fifteen cards," he pushes them towards him with an indicative gesture, and, in so doing, adds the three palmed cards to them. He continues:—

"As there are 32 cards in all, and you have taken *fifteen*, there should be *seventeen* left. Let us see whether that is so" (He counts the cards one by one on the table, then gathers them up,

and in so doing gets the little finger below, and palms off the three top cards.) "Quite right, seventeen. Will you, madam" (to some other person), "kindly undertake the charge of these seventeen cards?" He hands the cards accordingly, and at the first convenient opportunity gets rid of the three palmed cards, either on the *servante* of the table, or into his *profonde*.

"Now I am going to attempt, I won't say a diabolical operation, because I don't want to frighten anybody, but something which is at any rate a good deal out of the common order of things. I am going to order three cards to leave this lady's hands, and pass into those of that gentleman. Three times I shall strike the table with my magic wand, and at each stroke a card will pass from the one packet to the other.* One, two, three! The deed is done. 'You, sir, had fifteen cards. If you will examine them, you will find that you now have eighteen. And you, madam, have only fourteen remaining.'"

The use of a new pack of cards, and the verification of the numbers at each stage, make the trick really astounding. There is only one weak point, namely, that there are at the close, duplicates of three cards. Nobody is likely to notice this, but even the possibility may be avoided by taking a little extra trouble in the matter, as follows:—The wrapper of pack to be used must be opened,† the three bottom cards ascertained, and the three palmed cards made identical with these. The process of counting the pack on the table reversing the order of the cards, the three bottom cards are thereby brought to the top. When the pack is cut, the bottom half is given to the spectator, and the palmed cards added to these. In counting the upper half yourself, turn each card

* Robert-Houdin was accustomed to use, as the magic formula for this particular feat, the three words said to have appeared on the wall at the Feast of Belshazzar: "Mene! Tekel! Upharsin!" It seems to me, however, that their employment is not in the best of taste, and I have therefore suppressed them.

† To effect this, the paste or gum with which the wrapper is secured should be softened by the steam from a kettle. The wrapper may then be opened without difficulty

face upwards on the table, thereby retaining their order. When picked up again, the three special cards are still at the top, and these being palmed off, the pack has no duplicates, and there is no possible risk of discovery.

"Stop!" Three Cards having been drawn by Three different Persons, to make them appear at such Numbers in the Pack as the Drawers or any other Person may select.—For the purpose of this trick a forcing pack is necessary, consisting, say, of the king of hearts, nine of spades, and queen of diamonds, each ten times repeated. The bottom card of each series should be a "wide" card. At the top and bottom of the pack are two indifferent cards, say the ten of hearts and seven of diamonds.

Advancing to a spectator the performer, invites him to draw a card, taking care that he does so from among the first ten cards, which are kings of hearts. He forces in like manner the nine of spades and queen of diamonds on two other spectators, and then invites all three to replace their cards, taking care that each is put back in the series from which it was taken. He makes a false shuffle by the fourth or fifth method, leaving the order of the cards unaltered.* Then, standing at arm's length from the table, he takes the top card (which it will be remembered is the ten of hearts), and carelessly showing it, says, addressing the person who drew the first card (the king of hearts), "I am about to place these cards one by one upon the table. I shall do so with all possible deliberation, and you will see for yourselves that there is no possibility of trickery, but at any moment, whenever you please, you have only to say 'stop,' and the card I then have in my hand will be your own."

So saying, he begins to lay the cards one by one, and very slowly, upon the table, until he is told to "stop," when he turns up the card in his hand, and shows that it is the king of hearts.

But he may not be permitted to go so far. The drawer of

* If the performer is proficient in the use of the "bridge," he may use the still more effective *seventh* method, and replace them *in statu quo* by that means.

the card, who has seen, like the rest of the company, that the card the performer holds in his hand is the ten of hearts, may maliciously determine to put his power to a somewhat severe test, and say "stop," while that card is still in his hand. But the performer is prepared for such a contingency. The moment after showing the card he "changes" it by the first method for the card next following. The ten of hearts has therefore passed to the bottom of the pack, and the performer holds in its place the king of hearts, but for the sake of effect he expostulates a little.

"Already! That is hardly fair, because you have already seen this card. I don't usually reckon the first card at all; but I must do my best to satisfy you. What card did you draw?"

"The king of hearts."

"Here it is, you see:—the king of hearts," and the acute gentleman is discomfited.*

While the general attention is occupied by the appearance of the king of hearts, the performer cuts at the first long card, passing it and all remaining above it to the bottom. He then proceeds in the same way to produce the nine of spades and the queen of diamonds.

It is essential to proceed *slowly* in placing the cards on the table. It has an appearance of fairness, as excluding any possibility of changing the card *en route*, and, on the other hand, it tends to prevent any one delaying the command to stop until *more* than ten cards have been placed on the table, which would place the performer in an awkward position. If the trick be properly worked, there is very small risk of this, but should such a thing happen, the best thing would be for the performer to say, impatiently:—"Really, sir, if you don't make haste the cards will be exhausted before you have made up your mind!" and, as if merely to supply the deficiency, pick up a

* The "change" is a somewhat advanced sleight. If the performer does not feel equal to it, he can omit this little interlude. In such case he will not place the indifferent card on the top of the pack, and will not show the top card.

handful of the cards last placed on the table, and replace them on the pack, continuing as before. The proceeding would be suspicious, no doubt, but at any rate a failure would be avoided.

The risk of such a contingency might be further minimised by using a two-card pack only, when, as each card would be sixteen times repeated, the drawer might delay the call to that extent, without causing any embarrassment. This is the plan adopted by M. Verbeck, who, to further heighten the effect of the trick, draws each card along a broad red ribbon held between himself and the drawer. Of course, in this case two cards only are produced.

An expert in sleight of hand may dispense with the use of the prepared pack in the first instance, forcing the necessary cards from an ordinary pack and having them replaced therein. The pack may then be shuffled by an independent party, and exchanged for the "trick pack" during the performer's return to his table.

The Cards having been freely Shuffled and Cut into three or four Heaps, to Name the Top Card of each Heap.—This is a trick which mainly depends upon sheer impudence. If, therefore, the reader feels that he is, unhappily, lacking in that quality, he had better eschew it.

The performer palms off one card and notes what it is, say the seven of diamonds. He offers the rest of the pack to be shuffled, and when it is returned places the palmed card on the top, and lays the whole, face downwards, on the table. He then invites some one to cut the pack into four heaps, and declares that he will tell him at what cards he cuts. The pack is cut, accordingly, into four heaps, which are placed in a row, as under :—

1 2 3 4

1 representing the packet originally uppermost, on the top of which is the known card. Beginning with the heap at the opposite end, 4, the performer places his finger upon it, and, after a few moments' thought, says :—"This card is the seven of diamonds."

He does not show it, but at once transfers it to his left hand, taking care however, to note what it really is, say the queen of clubs. "This," he says, putting his finger on No. 3, "is the queen of clubs." He picks up this card, which is really, say, the nine of hearts, and deals with it in like manner; then, putting his finger on No. 2,—“And this is the nine of hearts,”—really (say) the ten of spades. “And this,” he says, putting his finger on No. 1, “is the ten of spades.” He adds this card to the other three in his hand, but at the opposite end to those last placed, and says, showing them:—“I was right, you see; here they are—the seven of diamonds, the queen of clubs, the nine of hearts and the ten of spades.”

The trick must be worked with an air of thorough confidence, and briskly, lest the spectators ask prematurely to see the cards already drawn.

Thought Anticipated.—Among the various feats of the conjurer, few are more startling, particularly to a high-class and intellectual audience, than that class of illusions in which the performer appears to read the thoughts of his spectators. Excluding the suggestion of confederacy (which, being the most natural explanation, should be guarded against by procuring the assistance of the person least open to suspicion), it seems as if there could be no deception in such a matter, and that the wizard must really possess, in some shape or other, a genuine thought-reading power. It is humiliating to have to confess that such is not the case, and that the thought-reading faculty of the conjurer rests on just as deceptive foundations as his other magical powers.*

* In making the foregoing observation, I refer to the ordinary performances of the conjurer. The occasional possibility of genuine thought-reading, under certain not very well-defined conditions, is established; but a public platform is the last place where it is likely to be practised with success, and I should pity the wizard who relied upon it for any essential information.

I do not here allude to the familiar “pin-finding” experiments, which are only in a very limited sense, illustrations of thought-reading.

The three or four tricks next following belong to this category.

A Person having Secretly Thought of a Card, and the Pack, having been Divided into Three Heaps to Declare in which Heap the Card thought of will be found.—Offer the pack with a request that it may be thoroughly shuffled. This done, place it face downwards on the table, dividing it into three heaps, as nearly equal as possible ; or, better still, invite another person to do so. Request some person to think of a card, telling him that by your magic power you will inform him which heap it is in. When he has done so, grasp his right hand and look fixedly into his eyes, requesting him to concentrate his mind on the card thought of. After a few moments, return to the table and gaze thoughtfully at each heap in succession, then touching one of them, say “Yes,—no,—yes : here it is. The card you thought of, sir, is in *this* heap” (indicating whichever you please). “May I ask you to name the card ?” He names, say, the knave of diamonds. “Quite right, and the knave of diamonds is in this heap. In order to prove that I do not afterwards place it there by any sleight of hand, permit me to show you, in the first place, that the knave of diamonds is not in either of these other two heaps.” You pick them up accordingly, and come forward, rapidly running them over, face upwards, as if merely to show that the required card is not among them. As the cards in your hand embrace two-thirds of the pack, it is two to one that, in reality, it is among them, and we will dispose of that alternative first. In such case you quickly draw it behind the other cards, and show the remainder only, proving apparently that the knave of diamonds is not there. Squaring up and turning over the pack, the knave of diamonds becomes the top card. Palming this off, and throwing aside these cards, you pick up the heap on the table, and in so doing place the palmed card on the top of it. “I was right, you see : I knew that the card you thought of was in this heap. But I know more than that. I know precisely whereabouts in this heap it is, and I will prove it by cutting at that precise point.”

You accordingly make believe to cut, but in reality, instead of simply cutting, you insert the little finger of the left hand half-way down the heap, and with the second finger and thumb of the right hand, held as in Fig. 2, lift up the *lower* half of the packet, the left thumb moving aside to allow of its passage.* To the eye of the spectator, you have merely cut the cards. In reality you have made the pass, and the top card of the heap remaining in the left hand is the knave of diamonds.

In the event of the knave of diamonds *not* being among the cards of the two combined heaps, it must clearly be, as you have stated, in the third heap on the table, but you do not know what position it occupies therein. In such case it is best simply to invite the person who thought of the card to step up to the table, and verify your statement for himself. You may then offer to show that your success was not the result of accident by repeating the feat. If you again chance to name the correct heap, you must be content with having done so; if not, you will conclude the trick in the more striking manner above described.

The piquet pack is preferable to the full whist pack for the above and similar feats, as the running through the cards, to disprove the presence of the card thought of, is much easier with the smaller, than with the larger number.

To Invite a Person secretly to Think of a Card, and before such Card is named to pick it out of the Pack.—This trick is almost identical in principle with that last described. A card having been thought of, the performer makes belief to “read” the thought with more or less of effort, and then, looking through the pack, selects one card. He does not show it, but places it, face downwards, on the table. “That, sir, is the card you thought of. To prove that there is ‘no deception,’ allow me to show you, in the first place, that your

* If preferred, the mode of “cutting” described at page 75, in which the lower heap is drawn out to the right instead of the left, may be adopted.

card is not in the pack. Will you tell the company what it was?" So saying, he proceeds as described in the last trick to find, pass to the back and palm off the card thought of, which we will suppose to be the queen of spades.

There are now two ways of finishing the trick. If the performer is using a table fitted with a *servante*, he will simply step up behind it, and (apparently) pick up and show the card lying upon it, which is found to be the queen of spades. In reality, he has, in the supposed act of picking up the card on the table, drawn it over the hinder edge and let it fall on the *servante*, while the palmed card is held up and shown in its place. The illusion, in competent hands, is complete.

In an ordinary drawing-room, however (and this is the most frequent field for the achievements of the card conjurer), a regular conjuring table will be but rarely available. The *dénouement* must in this case be altered. As good a plan as any is to leave the chosen card on the top, and, pack in hand (left), boldly advance to the table, and, picking up the card which lies there, say (without looking at it):—"Here it is, you see; I never make a mistake; the queen of spades." The announcement that you never make a mistake is received with shouts of hilarity, and you are gleefully informed that you have made one this time, at any rate, for the card you have just shown is (*say*) the ten of diamonds.

"What!" you say, pretending to misunderstand, "your card was the ten of diamonds? I understood you to say that you thought of the queen of spades." "So I did!" is the reply, "but you have shown another card; you showed the ten of diamonds."

The card is still in your hand, but you have long since "changed" it for the top card of the pack, which, as we know, is the real Simon Pure—the actual queen of spades. "I don't quite understand you," you say, with a bewildered air; "but I think your eyes must be at fault. Here is the card, and it is just what I have said all along—the queen of spades."

While the eyes of the audience are attracted to this card, the

performer will have ample opportunity to make with the other hand the single-handed pass, thereby bringing the ten of diamonds to the middle. "As for the ten of diamonds, it is here somewhere in the pack, but I really can't say where. Perhaps you would like to see for yourselves."

By way of variation, the performer may palm the queen of spades (face to the palm) and, picking up the card on the table with the same hand, show the latter; then transform same into the queen of spades by the "vertical change" described at page 22.

A Card having been Thought of by one Spectator, to offer the Pack to another, and cause him to draw the same Card.—In the two tricks last described the spectator is allowed full licence to think of any card he pleases. In the present we shall again invite him to do the same thing, but it is in this case essential, or at least very desirable, that he should think of such card as *we* please

This we attempt by means of one or other of the expedients described at pp. 12, 13.

We will suppose that the card we desire him to think of is the queen of spades. Whether he has done so or not will appear at a later stage of the proceedings, but having done our best in this particular, we forthwith turn away from him, and "force" that same card upon some other person, say a lady, requesting her not to look at it, but to keep it in her own possession.

Then, addressing the first person, we ask him to name the card he thought of. He answers, we will suppose, "the queen of spades." In such case we are in smooth water. "You are quite sure, sir, that you thought of the queen of spades, and that you did so of your own free will?" "Certainly." "And you, madam, you are quite sure that you freely chose the card you hold in your hand?" "Quite sure," is the reply.

"Ladies and gentlemen," continues the performer, "you are about to see an example of a very curious fact, an effect of sympathy, I presume, though I really can't profess to explain it. This gentleman has freely thought of a card; the——what was

it? Ah! the queen of spades. Thank you. And this lady has of her own free will taken a card from the pack. Will you turn it up, madam? You see, by a curious effect of that sympathy I was mentioning, the lady has drawn the very same card that gentleman thought of."

So far, we have assumed that all has gone smoothly. The gentleman has thought of, and the lady has drawn, the card we desired, but the case might have been otherwise. Let us suppose, in the first place, that the gentleman did *not* think of the desired card; but of some other, say the nine of clubs. Of course you do not know this, and you proceed to force the queen of spades; your safeguard lies in the fact that you have requested the drawer not to look at it. When the first person names the nine of clubs, you say, "The nine of clubs? Allow me in the first place to call your attention to a very curious circumstance. The nine of clubs is no longer in the pack," and turning over the cards, you show, by the expedient already described (p. 98) that it is (apparently) not so. "The fact is, sir, that by a curious effect of sympathy"—(here you take the queen of spades from the lady, and before showing it, "change" it for the nine of clubs, which is on the top of the pack)—"this lady drew, as you see" (here you turn up the card), "the very card you thought of."

A failure to force the queen of spades is a more remote contingency, but the performer must be prepared to meet it. In the case of a wrong card being drawn, the better plan is to have it replaced on the top of the queen of spades, to bring both (by the pass) to the top, and palm off the drawn card. Hold up the pack in the same hand, and get a sight of the card, which we will suppose to be the knave of diamonds; then enquire, with an appearance of anxiety, "Excuse me, madam, if I am wrong, but I think the card you drew was the knave of diamonds. That knave," (or whatever the card may be) "is the most troublesome card in the whole pack, and spoils every experiment he has to do with. See, he has already flown out of the pack, and slipped into my pocket," (from which you produce the card accordingly). "Would you mind taking

some other card instead, or perhaps some other lady will draw a card?" Again you offer the cards, and this time the right card is taken.

Where a trick is absolutely dependent upon the forcing of a given card, the conjurer should always be prepared with some such expedient as the above, to be used in case of a temporary failure. The same person should *not* again be asked to draw, as the same reason, whether stupidity or malevolence, may make him or her equally unmanageable on the second occasion. The performer must not, however, show the smallest discomfiture at his original failure, and the inviting of another person to draw should apparently be a mere after-thought, the more casual the better.

Thought Doubly Anticipated. To Place a Card Thought of by one Person at such Position in the Pack as another Person shall mentally Select.—As in the last trick, a gentleman is "forced" to think of, say, the queen of diamonds. The chooser having made his selection, the performer by means of a false shuffle places this card *seventh* from the top, and lays the pack on the table. Then, addressing another spectator, he says, "Would you, madam, have the kindness to think of a number—any number between one and ten?"

It is a curious fact, not readily explainable, but none the less true, that the choice more frequently falls on the number 7 than on any other, and we will for the moment suppose that such is the case. The performer proceeds—

"Will you be kind enough, sir, to name the card you thought of?"

"The queen of diamonds."

"And you, madam, what number have you fixed upon?"

"Seven."

"Good! Allow me to prove to you that I have in both instances anticipated your thoughts. Will you, sir, take the pack in your own hands, and see for yourself that the card you thought of is placed at the exact number the lady selected?"

But now for adverse contingencies. Let us suppose in the first

place that when invited to name the card thought of, the chooser does not name the queen of diamonds, but some other, say, the ace of spades. In such case, the performer,—calmly smiling, as though all was exactly as he would have it—takes up the pack, and dealing off the cards to the number named (*e.g.* seventh) puts that card aside face downwards on the table. Taking all the rest, he volunteers to show (as before) that the ace of spades is not in the pack, and brings that card to the top. Then retaining the pack in his left hand, and taking the queen of diamonds from the table with the right, he advances with it to the person who was entrusted with the choice; saying, “Here is your card, sir, the ace of spades.” The gentleman naturally protests, and says that the card shown to him was the queen of diamonds; but meanwhile the card has been “changed” (see last trick) and after a little “cheff” is turned up and found to be the ace of spades.

But there is yet another contingency which may arise. The queen of diamonds may be duly thought of, but the lady asked to choose a number may think of some other than seven.

Let us go through the possibilities *seriatim*. “First” and “tenth” are excluded by the terms of the invitation, which is to choose a number *between* one and ten.

For *second*—Five cards must be transferred from top to bottom by the “pass” before beginning to count. For *third*, four cards. For *fourth*, three cards. For *fifth*, two cards.

For *sixth*, an equivoque gets you out of the difficulty. You count off aloud the first six cards: “one, two, three, four, five, six.” And then turn up the required card.

For *eighth* or *ninth*, you count off six cards, and when you reach the seventh, “second-deal” (see page 21), either once or twice, as the case may be, and so keep back the seventh card to the right number.

If the performer is not proficient at second-dealing he can get out of the difficulty in another manner, by bringing one or two cards (as may be needed) from the bottom to the top by the pass, before beginning to count off.

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